The New REPUBLIC

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Capitalistic or Public Socialism?
by JOHN DEWEY

The Struggle in Russia - - *Vera Micheles Dean*
One Year of Hoover - - - - - - *Editorial*
War in the Power Commission - *George Soule*
Axël and Rimbaud - - - - *Edmund Wilson*
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The New REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

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The Week

THE fall of the Tardieu ministry seems already to have produced one important result, in moderating the French demands in the London conference. According to the London correspondent of The New York Times, M. Briand has indicated his willingness to reduce the French tonnage demands on the basis of a far less formidable guarantee of her security than has heretofore been asked. The French would now consent, it is understood, to accept, not a formal treaty which would need to be ratified by the American Senate, but a simple declaration by President Hoover that the United States would consult the other signatories of the Kellogg Pact in the event of a threat of war. An important precedent for such action has already been created by the fact that twice during 1929 the United States took the initiative in such action because of the situation which had developed between Russia and China. If this is now in fact the French position, it represents an important modification of their attitude, and suggests that there was less unanimity in support of M. Tardieu's program than had been supposed.

THE objections to the Briand suggestion are fairly obvious. The American Senate is jealous of its prerogatives. It would certainly not look with favor upon a plan which would in effect make a treaty without its "advice and consent." It is also clear that President Hoover's declaration, as a simple statement of executive policy, would not be binding upon his successor in office, so that the French would have their guarantee for a period which might be as short as three years, and could not in any case be longer than seven. Against these arguments must be set the fact that the United States will almost certainly follow the precedent created in the Russo-Chinese dispute if the occasion should again arise; so that Mr. Hoover in promising to do so, would hardly be doing more than predicting the course of events. If such a mild promise would satisfy the French, enable them to reduce their fleet, and thus avoid the present danger that the London conference will end in failure, it is at least worth careful consideration.

WILL political affairs in Japan henceforth be conducted on a strict two-party system? Will the independent groups in the Diet, which received concessions from former ministries in return for temporary support, be disregarded in the future? Must the prospect of a strong labor party be indefinitely deferred? Such are the important questions raised by the recent Japanese election, the second held on the basis of universal manhood suffrage. The minority groups, which included the outstanding liberals and labor leaders, lost half their total strength, and now hold only nineteen seats. The Minseito party, that of the present ministry, has 273 members of the lower house, while the Seiyukai party, its principal opponent, is left with only 174. During a recent ministry, the Seiyukai party—or many of its prominent members—had tolerated the extravagance and corruption which have been a conspicuous feature of Japanese government. Attacking this record, Premier Hamaguchi went to the polls with a program of "economy, hard work and economic reconstruction." The support he received is regarded as a victory by the "sound" business men, who now hold the same dominant position in Japan that they acquired long ago in the United States.

AT one of his recent breakfast conferences, President Hoover informed leaders of Congress that pending bills which carry appropriations not provided for in the budget would increase government expenditures during the next fiscal year by over a billion dollars, whereas the surplus will probably be only about $50,000,000. If these bills are passed, taxes must be increased. The superficial comment on this event is that the President is prudent and economical, whereas Congress is wasteful and extravagant. But the superficial comment overlooks the most important aspect of the matter. Many of the extra appropriations are not intrinsically wasteful, and ought to be made. It would not be an economic disadvantage, for instance, to have adequate retirement allowances for governmental employees, or to make reclamation projects succeed by offering necessary short-time credit to settlers, or to control insect pests which threaten agricultural prosperity. The truth is that tax reduction in the past has gone too far; and justifiable governmental expenditures are found to rise from year to year. Coolidge was saved from the short-sighted consequence of his penurious policy by a rapid increase of national prosperity and income; but Hoover has no such luck. We only wish the Congressmen had come back at Mr. Hoover by saying, very well, if we are to increase taxes, how about assenting to the British suggestion to abolish battleships? Our naval and military expenses are both the largest and the most wasteful parts of our budget.

THE recent word from Rome of the death of Mrs. Emelie Bigelow Hapgood marked the final point in a life that, for a while at least, had a unique relation to our theater. It was the relation of an amateur rather than a professional, in so far as that differentiation exists any more, though it was infinitely more fruitful, prophetic and luminous than most professional relationships. Only those on the inside can have an exact idea of the part Mrs. Hapgood played; and it remains to be seen how much we shall hear from the leading actor or so, the diverse lesser lights of our stage, the playwrights, designers, adapters, scene-painting establishments, producers and foreign innovators whom she discovered or believed in, and backed with her influence, her money, while it lasted, and her own great discernments. There are people who feel a certain aristocratic pleasure in a fine indebtedness to another, and there are some who carry a chip on their shoulders for fear a bit of the credit may be taken away from them. A part of those to whom Mrs. Hapgood gave so much were no doubt grateful, some were wholly forgetful, and some, in the manner of egoists everywhere, at times remembered their debt, which she had little interest in their remembering so long as they proved themselves to be what she thought they promised. She was one of those people so rare in the theater, who care nothing for anything connected with a work of art except that it be beautiful and exalted. There was in her spirit a kind of magnificent blindness to the small or incidental or even practical; a strange, bold mysticism, a sort of baroque richness of soul; and a faith which, once aroused, was like a child's or a mad saint's. In the theater she saw but forgot commonness, and thought only of how it might have luster, invention, wonder and a high, adventurous power. In an artist she looked to find if there was a necessity present by which the shine and glory she loved should appear in him. In life she loved vision, poetry, oblivion and splendor.

SENATOR COUZENS' committee investigating the power problem has already made a substantial contribution by throwing light on the friction within the staff of the Federal Power Commission, discussed in an article in this issue of The New Republic. Since that article was written, Mr. Bonner, the Executive Secretary of the Commission, has appeared before the Committee and offered a lame defense of his effort to force Chief Accountant King to "lay off" the power companies. He attributes Mr. King's attempt to do his job properly to the excessive zeal and ambition of the bureaucrat. Yet one has only to refer to the annual reports of the Commission for the past few years to discover that its former Executive Secretary consistently wrote of its inability to carry out the valuation and accounting work imposed upon it by law. The difficulty at that time was lack of adequate appropriations by Congress. Now that money is in sight, however, the principal obstacle has become Mr. Bonner, who was appointed Executive Secretary of the Commission since Mr. Hoover took office, who, it is alleged, was recommended by the head of the Southern California Edison Company, and who seems to be doing exactly what influential power companies want him to do.

A SCANDAL of this magnitude could not, of course, be ignored by the administration. Secretary Wilbur has issued a noncommittal statement concerning it, and the President has seized the occasion to assure Senator Couzens of his support for the Senator's bill establishing an independent Power Commission in place of that which now exists, whose members consist of three busy Department heads, and most of whose authority must be delegated to the permanent staff. In principle there is much to be said for the Couzens proposal, which was advocated by Mr. Hoover in his message to Congress. We must be sure, however, that if Congress enacts the bill, it does not loosen the admirable provisions of the present Water Power Act concerning valuation and recapture. We also hope that in setting up such a new commission the administration will be careful to retain the services of trained and honest experts like Mr. King and Solicitor Russell, and will be wary of candidates such as Mr. Bonner. Meanwhile, Senator Couzens should follow up this exceedingly useful start of his inquiry along other lines of investigation which

he has in mind. One of the most important of these concerns the actual amount of power wholesaled across state lines. At present there is no regulation, either state or federal, of the rates at which such power is sold, and Senator Couzens proposes to establish federal control over it. The power interests protest that its amount is so small as to be negligible. Let us discover the facts.

FOR extended comment on the work of the New York Commission on revision of the Public Service Commission Law we must await the final report. At present two important documents have appeared, a report of Colonel William J. Donovan as expert counsel to the Commission, which apparently represents the more conservative view, and a report of those members of the Commission appointed by the Governor, drafted by Frank C. Walsh and Professor Bonbright of Columbia. Both reports agree that regulation as now practised is highly unsatisfactory in protecting the consumer, and that if its failures are not remedied, public ownership will be the only alternative. Both recommend the creation of a public defender to care for the consumers' interests in proceedings before the Public Service Commission. The chief disagreement is on the method of fixing valuation as a rate base. The Governor's minority advocates actual prudent investment as the basis. Colonel Donovan suggests a more indecisive method including other considerations, to be embodied in voluntary contracts between the state and the utilities for limited periods. The latter also suggests a new method of appeal to the courts in case decisions of the Commission were not accepted, which would tend to shorten litigation. The disagreement on valuation is fundamental, and is sure to be discussed at great length in coming months.

THERE were several dramatic features about the recent presidential election in Colombia, which resulted in the victory of Enrique Olaya Herrera, the present Colombian Minister to the United States. The long campaigns of the two Conservative candidates, one of them supported by the Church and the other by the administration; Dr. Olaya's sudden decision to enter the race as a Liberal, his departture from Washington by swift steamer and his campaign of three weeks by airplane, his overwhelming victory—all these kept the correspondents busy and perhaps obscured the fundamentally economic nature of the question at issue. Colombia, in spite of her vast natural resources, has been suffering from a period of business depression. Colombia has also been unfriendly to foreign capital—which in this case means capital from the United States. Colombia has been exporting less oil than Venezuela. Dr. Olaya, in his campaign, promised to coöperate with American capital, in order to "turn the oil below ground into railroads and highways above ground." His new policy of friendliness has brought him success at the polls, but whether it will be permanently followed in Colombia is another question. For, the attitude of the Latin American countries toward the United States is a fundamental issue in their political life, and American capital is a sort of eternal feminine —with or without which very few of their governments can get along.

Hoover's First Year

JUST as Mr. Hoover entered the White House a year ago with a larger majority, a higher reputation, and apparently more smooth sailing ahead than has often been the fortune of Presidents, so now he is beset by more embarrassments and difficulties than have fallen to the lot of most of our chief executives during the first year of office. It is worth while reviewing his troubles, not for the sake of either condemnation or sympathy, but in order to assess the tendencies which they evince, and to judge their bearing on the future of this administration.

One of Mr. Hoover's first official acts was to call a special session of Congress for the ostensible purpose of redeeming his campaign promise for agricultural relief. This session, after a sharp tilt between the President and the Senate over the debenture, passed the sort of bill Mr. Hoover wanted, and his Federal Farm Board was set up. The Board is now in boiling water. It is attacked on the one hand by business men who fear that its effort to build up coöperatives and reform agricultural marketing will tread on their toes. If it did not make such an attempt, it would be subject to an equally bitter attack by the farmers' spokesmen. This conflict is not yet as embarrassing as it is likely to become; but a more imminent disaster threatens. The Board has tried, by extending credit at its disposal, to stabilize the prices of wheat and cotton; future deliveries of both commodities have ever since been sagging far under the pegged cash price. If the Board's guess was good as to the ultimate situation of demand and supply for the coming crop year, it will come through, but if its price cannot be maintained it will have suffered a monetary loss and a major blow to its prestige. The Board is also worrying about the possibility that the pegged prices may encourage overproduction which would render the farmers' situation worse than ever. If it fails on one or both counts, the critics of the President's farm program who, when he first enunciated it, called it superficial, will have a chance to crow.

Congress, after establishing the Farm Board, went on to rewrite the tariff, and after months of effort to do so, has not yet succeeded in producing an act. Here the President's leadership has been conspicuous by its absence. The House, under control of the Republican machine, passed a bill which was in effect a general revision upward of existing rates, manufacturing as well as agricultural. The Senate Committee, under Old Guard Republican

leadership, reported a bill with some of the manufacturing duties cut, but still embodying a general increase. But a coalition of western Republicans and Democrats in the Senate, protesting that the bill violated Mr. Hoover's purpose of protecting the farmer and not increasing his burden by raising rates on what the farmer must buy, has gone ahead to revise the manufacturing rates downward. Nobody knows whether Mr. Hoover now favors the Republican regulars or the coalition. He has done nothing except urge more speedy action. Meanwhile, party leaders are restive because their rule has been successfully challenged, manufacturers who want more protection are thoroughly aroused, and the country in general is sick of the whole business. No matter what kind of bill is eventually passed, important elements of Mr. Hoover's 1928 support will be alienated.

It was generally admitted, even by Mr. Hoover's opponents during the campaign, that reduction of armament was a goal close to his heart—and one important to his political success as well, since it offered one of the few major possibilities of cutting expenses and thus making possible further tax reductions, if not, indeed, of preventing higher taxes. For a while things seemed to be going well for him in this endeavor. But at the London conference it has already been settled that we shall have to go ahead with cruiser building on a large scale and that little is to be gained in reduction of any other class. Even the chance to reduce the battleship fleet appreciably has not been grasped.

Mr. Hoover's most important appointment—that of Mr. Hughes as Chief Justice—called forth an unexpected volume of protest from the progressive wing of his party, which is supposed to be endeavoring to carry out his wishes on the tariff. It evidenced a growing political dissent, of the sort which gave rise to the La Follette split in 1924.

None of these things would seem quite so serious if Coolidge prosperity had continued. But the worst smash of Wall Street prices in history destroyed that bubble. In addition we have been suffering from a genuine industrial depression, with a rapid drop of production and employment. Predictions of revival are frequent; signs of better times are constantly being discerned here or there by this or that official. Revival is sure to come sometime, but it has not yet arrived. The measures which Mr. Hoover was able to take after the market crash are recognized as being only of an emergency nature; it will always be uncertain whether we should not have had as prompt and effective a recovery if he had not taken them. At any rate the public is learning that Republican prosperity was not self-perpetuating; that no adequate measures had been taken in advance to prevent a depression or even to mitigate its suffering in unemployment. And it remains uncertain whether, even after a normal recovery, national "prosperity" will repeat the Coolidge performance of rapidly mounting production and profits.

These and other misfortunes—among which must not be forgotten the increased acerbity of the prohibition controversy—should be examined in the light of Mr. Hoover's tendency and temperament. He was to be, we remember, the "engineer in politics," he was to reorganize the government, to call in the expert to remedy the economic and social troubles of the nation. This rather vague program is by no means all pretense. Mr. Hoover is not a mere opportunist, content with political safety and quiescence. He really wants to see the farmers more prosperous, to eliminate industrial and governmental wastes, to improve the administration of justice, to prevent unemployment, to seek peace. By the appointment of numerous semi-official commissions, some of greater expert competence than others, he has taken the first steps toward the goals which mean most to him. But so far he has been able to make almost no progress toward actual achievement.

The Republican party, which gave him his nomination and election, is proving, as The New Republic expected, an extremely weak instrument with which to attain the ends which Mr. Hoover has most at heart. It is full of stiff traditions and stubborn interests; it is encrusted with an accumulated inability to unlearn and to learn. We speak, of course, not of the nominal Republicans who consistently oppose the old leadership between elections, but of the established machinery of the party, and of those who give this machinery its financial and moral support. Mr. Hoover is not really a high-tariff man; he knows too much to be a thoroughgoing protectionist; yet in order to retain the support of the machine which nominated him he had to lug the tariff into the campaign and prepare the way for the muddle which now hampers him, but which was bound to accompany congressional tariff revision. The reactionary element of the party is certain to denounce as socialistic any effective aid to the farmers or reorganization of the agricultural marketing system. Its *laissez faire* policy in economics made certain the recurrence of depression. It is peppered with big-navy men and isolationists, who put pressure on him to thwart disarmament. It will be jealous of his expert commissions and will block most of his projects of economic reorganization at every turn. It will insist on conservative appointments to the courts, and on support of the views of the large electric utilities. If Mr. Hoover is to get anywhere, he must build a new center of influence in the Republican party, more in accord with his own views. It is not necessary for the party to become really radical in order to support him; his ideas are not radical. He would not have to rely solely on the allegiance of disaffected farmers and industrial workers in order to effectuate his purposes, but at least he must find a source of power in the more progressive forces of business, engineering and management. Republicanism is always likely to represent chiefly the dominant powers of industry, but if Mr. Hoover's leadership

means anything, it means a new Republicanism which will call forth the utmost promise of industrial capitalism.

There is in Mr. Hoover's political history a certain appearance of timidity and indecisiveness, a reluctance to define issues and carry on warfare against those in positions of power, which makes one wonder whether he will be able to shake off the old Republicanism and build a new one. For years we have been told by his liberal supporters that his intentions are better than his accomplishments, that we must be patient. While a Cabinet official under Harding and Coolidge he could not, it was said, do much about crucial national issues. We must wait until they were out of the way. When he was a candidate it was said that he could not take forthright positions during a campaign. We must wait until he was elected. But now the same indecisiveness and timidity seem to prevail wherever, as in the tariff or naval reduction, he meets formidable opposition. And we are compelled to return to the old question of whether anyone who was content to be an official Republican under Harding and Coolidge, and who made traditional Republicanism a pathway to election, will not remain content to compromise on vital issues with the old Republicanism during his term of office. And if so, any of us who have been patient so long in view of Mr. Hoover's celebrated good intentions may have in the end to be patient with his failure.

This journal is doubtful whether a new Republicanism, if it could become a dominant force in our national life, would be sufficient to remedy the defects of industrial civilization. We doubt if Mr. Hoover's conceptions and methods, if they were given scope, are fundamental enough to do all that is necessary. But it is highly important that enlightened capitalist industrialism be given its chance, that modern engineering methods be allowed to make those limited contributions which they unquestionably could make if social and political forces would allow them to do so. On this score we sincerely hope that Mr. Hoover will shake off his encumbrances and proceed to execute what is in his mind. We wish him the best of success in doing so. We hope that the strength of his intellect and the resources of his character are such that the end of his second year may offer more encouragement than the end of his first.

Russia and Religion

THERE are two aspects to the matter of Russia's anti-clerical activities, which cannot be considered separately. There is, first of all, what is happening within the country, and second, the world-wide campaign of protest which—in theory at least—has been occasioned by the Soviet government's actions.

While it is impossible for any outsider to know in detail what is going on in Russia, it may be said with confidence that there has been no change in the legal status of religion. Free and public worship is still permitted, by any and all sects. The highest estimate of the number of churches closed, not merely during the past few months, but during the whole period of the Revolution, is only 6 percent of the total of some 50,000. Since Russia, like most other countries, had a far greater number of churches than was needed to satisfy any reasonable demands of the population, there is no ground for belief that her Christian, Jewish or Mohammedan population is actually suffering from any lack of facilities for worship, or is being restricted in the right to do so.

It would be idle to deny that the Soviet government has been engaged in a long struggle against certain aspects of organized religion, and in particular, part of the priesthood of the Greek Orthodox Church. The government insists that these priests have been opposed, not for their religious activities, but as counter-revolutionaries; and the evidence available indicates that in many cases, if not all, this charge was a justified one. Under the Tsar, the Church occupied a position of power and privilege such as no American, familiar only with conditions in his own country, can understand. We need to go to the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America for a parallel. So far as the cities are concerned, and in relation to the centralized power of the Greek Church, this campaign has been carried on with great vigor, and has been largely effective; but while in theory it included the village priests, in fact these have in the main been let alone until within the past year or two. It has recently been waged even in the villages, as a part of the great drive against the kulaks, or rich peasants, which is described elsewhere in this issue of The New Republic by Mrs. Dean.

In some cases, no doubt the policy of suppression of the village priests has been unjust and unwarranted. In others, it is equally certain that priest and kulak have played into each other's hands, and have been guilty of what is to the loyal Russian Communist the unpardonable sin—interfering with the program of the Revolution. That program will stand or fall, in large degree, on the success of the agricultural plan of which the abolition of the kulak is a vital part. The same rigor with which he is being rooted out is now being applied against those priests who are regarded as his allies.

The Russian government is high-handed and dictatorial; it has a ruthlessness in its dealings with individuals which an Oriental understands and accepts, but an Occidental cannot. To suppose, however, that Russia's millions are being deprived of the right to worship, or that priests and rabbis are being exterminated on solely religious grounds, is a grave distortion of the truth. The Russian Communists are atheists on principle; they agree with Lenin that "religion is the opiate of the people"; but they have recognized for twelve and a half

years that in the present condition of the masses of the people in Russia, at any rate, it is hopeless to expect to wean them, suddenly and completely, away from their dependence on church, synagogue and mosque.

When we consider the present wave of protest outside Russia, we are struck by the fact that it seems out of all proportion to the inciting cause, as well as too sudden and universal to be of spontaneous origin. We find, moreover, that in France, it is being stirred up by Le Figaro and L' Ami du Peuple, papers owned by M. Coty, the perfumer, who wants a military combination against Russia. This is demanded even more openly in the papers of the *émigrés* in France, which are using the anti-religious activities as an excuse to urge the invasion of Russia and the overthrow of the Soviet government by armed force. It is further interesting to note that most of the stories of alleged atrocities in Russia come from Riga, which has for many years been a general factory for lies about the Soviet experiment.

In England, public mass-meetings are being held under notoriously anti-Russian auspices, at which twelve-year-old stories of happenings in Russia—stories which may or may not be true—are narrated as though they had taken place only yesterday. Premier MacDonald correctly describes the campaign as "agitation inspired by politics as much as by religious toleration." It is worthy of note that those who have lent their names most prominently to the present anti-Russian propaganda, both in England and in the United States, are persons who have never before made themselves conspicuous in the fight for human freedom.

The activities in the United States are given a double interest when we compare them with what took place during the recent quarrel between Mexico and the Roman Catholic Church. The Mexican laws and governmental policy paralleled those in Russia; yet the Americans who are now protesting so loudly about the Soviet government were singularly silent then. Their patience, moreover, turned out to be wise and well justified. Church and State have come to an understanding in Mexico much sooner and on better terms than would have been the case if outsiders had attempted to use the coercive measures which are now being urged against Russia.

The Moscow authorities, as was to be expected, are interpreting the crusade against them in strictly economic terms. They profess to see in it the retort of Western capitalism to the threat of competition in the world's markets from their socialized factories. No doubt the general fear of Bolshevism among conservatives in every country is contributing to the present campaign, but there is little evidence that capitalists are seriously concerned as yet over the competition of Russian goods, and the notion that they are capable of getting together under the stimulus of that fear, and launching a campaign based on supposedly religious grounds, attributes to them a greater degree of both unanimity and malignity than they possess. A more accurate estimate, undoubtedly, would be to say that politics, economics and genuine religious feeling are present in the campaign in roughly equal parts. Certainly, nothing seems clearer than that those who are asking for a military combination against Russia will fail to get their way. The days of religious wars are over. Even if the allegations against the Soviet government were true—which they are not; and even if those who protest were animated by idealistic motives—which most of them are not, it is doubtful whether any important government would be influenced even to the extent of breaking off diplomatic relations. Religious emotion is no longer the political force in the world it once was.

While this is true, the protest has already served something of a useful purpose. Russia is less insensitive to outside opinion than she pretends, and it is clear that the officials in Moscow have been greatly disturbed by the campaign against them. The fear has been expressed in America that criticism from abroad would cause the Russian Communists to act with even greater severity against the priests, but there is no evidence that this has been the case. The wisest men among the Russians have long known that the way to destroy a dogma is to substitute another dogma for it. This they have successfully accomplished in the case of their own followers: Communism is a religion with them, and one as fanatical as modern times have seen. The anti-religious crusade, with its burlesque street processions and its symbolical destruction of monasteries, stone by stone, by the Red Army, is intended to be constructive in character, substituting the ideal of "all power to the Soviets" for that of the Church. There is, as we have said, no reliable evidence that there has been a return to the excesses of twelve years ago, and if the Soviet authorities are wise, there will be none. Their enemies have shown themselves so numerous and alert that Moscow cannot afford to risk giving them justification for the charges which they are making at present on such a slender foundation of fact.

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RATES: SINGLE COPIES, FIFTEEN CENTS; YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION, FIVE DOLLARS; CANADIAN, FIVE DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS; FOREIGN, SIX DOLLARS; THREE MONTHS' TRIAL, ONE DOLLAR.

The Struggle in Russia

THE world is now witnessing with amazement a pitched battle between militant Russian Communism, on the one hand, and the churches of the Western world on the other. In an attempt to uproot opposition in Russia once and for all, the Soviet government has vigorously renewed its anti-religious campaign: a number of churches of all denominations have been closed or demolished, to be replaced by educational centers; religion is flouted in the press and in public parades; the existence of "religious associations" has been subjected to strict regulation by a new code. This action has aroused a storm of protest outside Russia. The Pope, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Bishop Manning, the Lutheran Council, the American Jewish Congress, have joined in denouncing the Soviet government for the suppression of religious freedom. Their denunciations have been echoed by persons who, though indifferent to organized religion, see in the anti-religious compaign an intolerable curtailment of individual liberty. In this chorus of protest the Soviet government claims to discern only another indication of the fear and jealousy with which the capitalistic states view the progress of the Five Year Plan.

These spectacular attacks upon religion and the capitalistic states are but incidents of the drama which is now being enacted in Russia. Lenin had said in no uncertain terms: ". . . The 'last and decisive battle' is not with international capitalism —there we shall still have many 'last and decisive battles'—no, it is with Russian capitalism, the capitalism which grows out of small-scale peasant farming and is supported by it." No words could better describe the situation which is absorbing the attention of the Soviet government today.

Theoretically no country could have been less prepared for the practical application of Marxism than was Russia in 1917. Industry was in its infancy; the proletariat constituted a minority of the population in a country predominantly agricultural. The universe of the Russian peasant centered in his own plot of land, no matter how small. Indifferent to politics, he had not learned to share the city workman's enthusiasm for a world-wide uprising of the masses. Unlike the workman, he had lares and penates—a house, a barn, a plow—which he was not ready to contribute to the common fund. The Revolution, far from challenging his sense of social justice, appealed strongly to his acquisitive instinct: he saw in it a means of enlarging his holdings and of improving his economic condition at the expense of dispossessed land owners.

An open conflict between peasants and workmen at the very outset of the Revolution would have proved fatal to the existence of the Soviet government. Lenin, fully aware of this danger, hoped to avert it by forging a "link" of common interests between the two groups. In the meantime, however, the government found it imperative to placate the peasants who controlled the output of grain and thus held the lives of workmen and soldiers in their hands.

The nationalization of land which had been proclaimed in 1917 remained largely a paper policy. During the troubled years, 1917-1921, when counter-revolution threatened on several fronts, the government took drastic measures to extract grain from the peasants; it did not, however, deprive them of land. In 1921, "war Communism" was abandoned in an attempt to restore the economic position of the country. The peasants were not only permitted, but encouraged, to cultivate their holdings freely, and no decision was taken as to the ultimate disposal of land.

The New Economic Policy emphasized the differentiation which had developed even prior to 1917 between the more fortunate or more enterprising peasants, the so-called "kulaks," on the one hand, and the poor and "middle" peasants, on the other. After 1921, the kulak found it possible to increase his profits by selling his grain to private traders at a higher price than that fixed by the government. He enlarged his holdings and rented machinery and horses to his less fortunate neighbors. Strictly speaking, the term "kulak" is applicable only to the peasant who "exploits" other peasants, either by hiring them, or by renting agricultural equipment to them. The average value of a kulak's means of production is at present estimated at about $700. At various times, however, ownership of a new home or simply the profitable cultivation of land, have sufficed to place peasants in the category of kulaks.

In essence, the kulak is a "capitalist in embryo." He is afflicted with capitalist psychology. His interest in private gain for private ends outweighs his loyalty to society. Not only does he constitute an obstacle to the development of the economic policies of the Soviet government; he is a political danger as well. Deprived of the franchise since 1928, the kulak still exerts such influence on elections to the village soviets as to threaten the dictatorship of the proletariat at its source. He is suspected of bribing the weaker brethren in his community for the purpose of obtaining favors for himself and members of his family. He is accused of associating with undesirable elements of the population—with priests and remnants of the gentry. To him is traced all opposition to the government's educational plans and anti-religious policy. In cartoons

and popular rhymes the kulak is pictured as growing fat on the blood he sucks out of the poorer peasants. All the hatred, suspicion and derision which had once been directed against the bourgeois have now fallen to the lot of the kulak.

A degree of indecision had until recently characterized the policy of the Soviet government with regard to him. Ruthless suppression was advocated in 1928 by Trotzky, leader of the Left wing of the Communist party. The economic situation did not at that moment warrant so drastic a program. Trotzky was chastised for the untimeliness, rather than for the extremity, of his views. The time for temporizing with the kulak had passed, however, in 1929, when the spokesmen of the Right wing—Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky—expressed themselves in favor of leniency. Their public recantation in November, 1929, was the last indication of a rift in the ranks of the Communist party. Immediately after, the Soviet government embarked on a merciless campaign of violence and propaganda which has for its avowed purpose the complete and final extermination of the kulaks as a class.

This definite swing to the Left after a period of apparent uncertainty was dictated primarily by the necessity of fulfilling the Five Year Plan which had been inaugurated in 1928. The Five Year Plan calls for the industrialization of agriculture by means of a thorough overhauling of the Russian peasant's antiquated agricultural methods. Individual small-scale farms are to be pooled in large-scale collective farms *(Kolhoz)*, which are to be managed on a coöperative basis according to the most advanced technical methods. The state places all available information regarding scientific farming at the disposal of the collective farms, and extends to them large credits for the purchase of improved seed, fertilizers and agricultural machinery, especially tractors. The collective farms, for their part, are under contract to turn the marketable surplus over to the government at a fixed price. The peasants, upon entering the collectives, pool land, capital and equipment. No uniform rules have as yet been adopted with regard to the division of income among members. A part of the capital of each collective farm, however, constitutes an "indivisible fund," which is used exclusively for the further development of the farm. It is expected that the collective farms will eventually become self-supporting, and will find it possible to dispense with state aid.

At the present time state farms *(Sovhoz)*, used chiefly as experimental stations, occupy 1.82 million hectares of land, while collective farms occupy 4.63 million hectares—a total of 6.45 million hectares out of 105 million hectares of land under cultivation. Five and one-half percent of the total grain production is furnished by state and collective farms. At the end of the period covered by the Five Year Plan, that is, in 1932-1933, five million hectares of land, it is hoped, will be organized as state farms, and twenty-one million hectares as collective farms.

The "collectivization" of land is a logical step in the fulfilment of the Soviet government's vast economic program. The production of grain must be rapidly increased, and must be controlled by the government, if the needs of the workmen for food and machinery are to be satisfied. The failure of the government to secure loans in capitalistic states makes the further purchase of industrial and agricultural machinery abroad contingent on the development of Russia's exports. The success of large-scale collective farming depends in the last analysis on the coöperation of the peasant masses, on their conscious interest in the fate of Communism in Russia. The kulaks, in the opinion of the government, contribute an obstacle to the establishment of the famous "link" between peasants and workmen. They hamper "collectivization" at a moment when the country is straining every nerve to carry out the Five Year Plan. Opposition, or even indifference, is now nothing short of treason. The kulaks as a class must be "liquidated."

In Communist terminology "liquidation" can mean only one of two things: exile or death. In its struggle with the kulaks the government gives and expects no quarter. The possessions of the kulak—land, cattle, implements—are first to be taxed, then turned over to the collective farms, which he will be precluded from joining. The kulaks and their families are to be exiled to remote regions of Russia. The poor and middle peasants, described as "class enemies" of the kulaks, are charged with the execution of these drastic measures. Lest they, too, should falter in their loyalty to Communism, workmen and soldiers are sent out into the countryside to act as "militant organizers" of collective farms. "Class war" now rages in the villages. Nor is the phrase exaggerated. The government describes all aspects of the situation in military terms. "Shock troops" of workmen are attacking along the "agricultural front" in an effort to stimulate the spring sowing "campaign."

The kulaks, for their part, realize that their last hour has struck, and are fighting grimly with their backs to the wall. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." The kulaks set fire to Soviet offices and granaries; they murder Soviet officials; in a last desperate attempt to thwart the collective movement, they kill horses and cattle rather than part with them. As a group, the kulaks are more numerous and more difficult to exterminate than the bourgeoisie. Unlike the bourgeoisie, they are not concentrated in definite and easily accessible localities, nor are their "class" characteristics as clearly marked. Scattered throughout the length and breadth of the land, enjoying in many regions a degree of influence over the poor and middle peasants, they can be eliminated only in the course of long and arduous guerilla warfare, and not without grave economic loss to the state.

The Soviet government enlists the coöperation of the poor and middle peasants on grounds which have little in common with abstract ideas of social justice or the welfare of society as a whole. On January 21, 1920, Kalinin, the President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, summed up the attitude of these peasants as follows:

> . . . The peasants have understood that only by means of the collectivization of their small and scattered farms can they obtain an improvement of their material well-being and raise their cultural level.

The material inducements held out by the government, however, must be promptly transmuted into reality—into nails, boots and radios—if the interest of the peasants in the collective movement is to be kept up at fever-pitch. The government has not yet succeeded in lowering the price of manufactured goods to the level at which the peasant can afford to purchase the articles which he once regarded as luxuries, but which a higher standard of living has transferred into the category of necessities. In other words, the government has not yet closed the famous "scissors"—the divergence between the prices of manufactured and those of agricultural products. Nor can it expect to do so until it has still further increased the tempo of industrial production, which in turn is conditioned upon its ability to furnish the workmen with food and machinery. Agriculture remains the most important link in this vicious circle.

The advantages which Russia may be expected eventually to derive from "collectivization" cannot as yet be clearly determined. The introduction of modern agricultural methods, the electrification of the villages, the increasing use of tractors and other machinery, will doubtless serve to improve the condition of agriculture. The management of large-scale farms on a profitable basis, however, calls for a degree of efficiency and intelligence which may not be easily found at the outset among the poor and middle peasants, many of whom have shown little initiative or ingenuity in the management of their own holdings. Yet even among them a differentiation of ability may be expected to appear; leaders may emerge who in their turn are tainted with kulak psychology. The Soviet government is faced with a dilemma: on the one hand, it must stimulate the enthusiasm of the peasants, appeal to their pride and self-interest, in order to raise the level of productivity; on the other hand, it must maintain iron discipline among them to prevent the recurrence of kulak activities.

The Soviet government is dealing with two incalculable factors in the village: the peasant and the elements. Failure on the part of the government to obtain from the peasants the sacrifice of present advantages for the sake of a future Communist state will endanger the very existence of the collective farms. A hard frost, an untimely thaw, prolonged drought, may wipe out the new crop on which the government bases its optimistic expectations. To the Soviet government few things appear impossible: it may break or transform the peasant; it may be fortunate in escaping the wrath of the elements. Nevertheless, to paraphrase Lenin, it may be said without exaggeration that within the boundaries of Russia, Communism is now engaged in fighting a last and decisive battle against capitalism.

VERA MICHELES DEAN.

TWO POEMS

These two lyrics, both of which she had written in 1919, were left by Katherine Mansfield among her unpublished manuscripts at her death in 1923. Neither of them has been printed in this country.—THE EDITORS.

A Sunset

A beam of light was shaken out of the sky
On to the brimming tide, and there it lay,
Palely tossing like a creature condemned to die
Who has loved the bright day.

Ah, who are these that wing through the shadowy air?
She cries, in agony. Are they coming for me?
The big waves croon to her: Hush now! There, now, there!
There is nothing to see.

But her white arms lift to cover her shining head,
And she presses close to the waves to make herself small.
On their listless knees the beam of light lies dead,
And the birds of shadow fall.

Old-Fashioned Widow's Song

She handed me a gay bouquet
Of roses pulled in the rain,
Delicate beauties, frail and cold—
Could roses heal my pain?

She smiled: "Ah, c'est un triste temps!"
I laughed and answered "Yes,"
Pressing the roses in my palms.
How could the roses guess?

She sang: "Madame est seule?" Her eye
Snapped like a rain-washed berry.
How could the solemn roses tell
Which of us was more merry?

She turned to go: she stopped to chat;
"Adieu!" at last she cried.
"Mille mercis pour ces jolies fleurs!" . . .
At that the roses died.

The petals drooped, the petals fell,
The leaves hung crisped and curled.
And I stood holding my dead bouquet
In a dead world.

KATHERINE MANSFIELD.

Capitalistic or Public Socialism?

The Fourth Article in Professor Dewey's Series, "Individualism, Old and New"

I ONCE heard a distinguished lawyer say that the earlier American ideas about individual initiative and enterprise could be recovered by an amendment of a few lines to the federal Constitution. The amendment would prohibit all joint stock enterprises and permit only individual liability to have a legal status. He was, I think, the only unadulterated Jeffersonian Democrat I have ever met. He was also logical. He did not delude himself into supposing that the pioneer gospel of personal initiative, enterprise, energy and reward could be maintained in an era of aggregated corporate capital, of mass production and distribution, of impersonal ownership and of ownership divorced from management. Our political life, however, still nominally proceeds on the assumption that this very illusion can be accepted as a fact.

The myth is still current that socialism desires to use political means in order to divide wealth equally among all individuals, and that it is consequently opposed to the development of trusts, mergers and consolidated business in general. It is regarded, in other words, as a kind of arithmetically fractionized individualism. This notion of socialism is of the sort that would naturally be entertained by those who cannot get away from the inherent conception of the individual as an isolated and independent unit. In reality, Karl Marx was the prophet of just this period of economic consolidation. If his ghost hovers above the American scene, it must find legitimate satisfaction in our fulfilment of his predictions.

In these predictions, however, Marx reasoned too much from psychological economic premises and depended too little upon technological causes —the application of science to steam, electricity and chemical processes. That is to say, he argued to an undue extent from an alleged constant appropriation by capitalists of all surplus values created by the workers—surplus being defined as anything above the minimum needed for their continued subsistence. He had no conception, moreover, of the capacity of expanding industry to use new inventions so as to develop new wants, new forms of wealth, new occupations; nor did he imagine that the intellectual ability of the employing class would be equal to seeing the need of sustaining consuming power by high wages in order to keep up production and its profits. This explains why his prediction of a revolution in political control, caused by the general misery of the masses and resulting in the establishment of a socialistic society, has not been realized in this country. Nevertheless, the issue which he raised—the relation of the economic structure to political operations—is one that actively persists.

Indeed, it forms the only basis of present political questions. Wealth, property and the processes of manufacturing and distribution—down to retail trade through the chain system—can hardly be socialized in outward effect without a political repercussion. It constitutes an ultimate issue which must be faced by new or existing political parties. There is still enough vitality in the older individualism to offer a very serious handicap to any party or program which calls itself by the name of Socialism. But in the long run, the realities of the situation will exercise control over the connotations which, for historical reasons, cling to a word. In view of this fact, the fortunes of a party called by a given name are insignificant.

In one important sense, the fundamental character of the economic question is not ignored in present politics. The dominant party has officially constituted itself the guardian of prosperity; it has gone further and offered itself as the author of prosperity. It has insinuated itself in that guise into the imagination of a sufficient number of citizens and voters so that it owes its continuing domination to its identification with prosperity. Our presidential elections are upon the whole determined by fear. Hundreds of thousands of citizens who vote independently or for Democratic candidates at local elections and in off-year congressional elections regularly vote the Republican ticket every four years. They do so because of a vague but influential dread lest a monkey-wrench be thrown into the economic and financial machine. The dread is as general among the workers as among small traders and storekeepers. It is basically the asset that keeps the dominant party in office. Our whole industrial scheme is so complex, so delicately interdependent in its varied parts, so responsive to a multitude of subtle influences, that it seems definitely better to the mass of voters to endure the ills they may already suffer rather than take the chance of disturbing industry. Even in the last election, in spite of both the liquor and the Catholic issue, this was, I believe, the determining factor.

Moreover, the fact that Hoover offered himself to the popular imagination as a man possessed of the engineer's rather than the politician's mind was a great force. Engineering has accomplished great

things; its triumphs are everywhere in evidence. The miracles that it has wrought have given it the prestige of magical wonder-working. A people sick of politicians felt in some half-conscious way that the mind, experience and gifts of an engineer would bring healing and order into our political life. It is impossible to present statistics as to the exact force of the factors mentioned. Judgment on the two points, especially the latter, must remain a matter of opinion. But the identification of the Republican party with the maintenance of prosperity cannot be denied, and the desire for the engineer in politics is general enough to be at least symptomatic.

Prosperity is largely a state of mind, and belief in it is even more so. It follows that skepticism about its extent is of little importance when the mental tide runs with the idea. Although figures can be quoted to show how spotty it is, and how inequitably its economic conditions are distributed, they are all to no avail. What difference does it make that eleven thousand people, having each an annual income of over $100,000, appropriated in 1927 about one-twenty-fifth of the net national income? What good does it do to cite official figures showing that only 20 percent of the income of the favored eleven thousand came from salaries and from profits of the businesses they were personally engaged in, while the remaining 80 percent was derived from investments, speculative profits, rent, etc.? That the total earnings of eight million wage workers should be only four times the amount of what the income-tax returns frankly call the "unearned" income of the eleven thousand millionaires goes almost without notice. For anyone to call attention to this discrepancy is considered an aspersion on our rugged individualism and an attempt to stir up class feeling. Meanwhile, the income-tax returns for 1928 show that in seven years the number of persons having an annual income of more than $1,000,000 has increased from sixty-seven to almost five hundred, twenty-four of whom had incomes of over $10,000,000 each.

Nevertheless, the assumption of guardianship of prosperity by a political party means the assumption of responsibility, and in the long run the ruling economic-political combination will be held to account. The over-lords will have to do something to make good. This fact seems to me to be the center of the future political situation. Discussion of the prospective political development in connection with corporate industry may at least start from the fact that the industries which used to be regarded as staple, as the foundations of sound economy, are depressed. The plight of agriculture, of the coal and textile industries, is well known. The era of great railway expansion has come to a close; the building trades have a fluctuating career. The counterpart of this fact is that the now flourishing industries are those connected with and derived from new technical developments. Without the rapid growth in the manufacture and sale of automobiles, radios, airplanes, etc.; without the rapid development of new uses for electricity and superpower, prosperity in the last few years would hardly have been even a state of mind. Economic stimulus has come largely from these new uses for capital and labor; surplus funds drawn from them have kept the stock market and other forms of business actively going. At the same time, these newer developments have accelerated the concentration and accumulation of super-fortunes.

These facts seem to me to define the issue of future politics. The fact of depression has already invaded political action in legislation and administration. What will happen when industries now new become in turn overcapitalized and consumption does not keep up in proportion to investment in them; when they, too, have an excess capacity of production? There are now, it is estimated, eight billions of surplus savings a year, and the amount is increasing. Where is this capital to find its outlet? Diversion into the stock market gives temporary relief, but the resulting inflation is a "cure" which creates a new disease. If it goes into the expansion of industrial plants, how long will it be before they, too, "overproduce"? The future seems to hold in store an extension of political control in the social interest. We have the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Federal Reserve Board, and now the Farm Relief Board—a socialistic undertaking on a large scale sponsored by the party of individualism. The probabilities seem to favor the creation of more such boards in the future, in spite of all concomitant denunciations of bureaucracy and proclamations that individualism is the source of our national prosperity.

The tariff question, too, is undergoing a change. Now, it is the older industries which, being depressed, clamor for relief. The "infant" industries are those which are indifferent, and which, with their growing interest in export trade, are likely to become increasingly indifferent or hostile. The alignment of political parties has not indeed been affected so far by economic changes—beyond the formation of insurgent blocs within the old parties. But this fact only conceals from view the greater fact that, under cover of the old parties, legislation and administration have taken on new functions due to the impact of trade and finance. The most striking example, of course, is the effort to use governmental agencies and large public funds to put agriculture on a parity with other forms of industry. The case is the more significant because the farmers form the part of the population that has remained most faithful to the old individualistic philosophy, and because the movement is definitely directed to bringing them within the scope of collective and corporate action.

The question of whether and how far the newer industries will follow the cycle of the older and now depressed ones, becoming overcapitalized, overproductive in capacity and overcharged with carrying costs, is, of course, a speculative one. The

negative side of the argument demands, however, considerable optimism. It is at least reasonably certain that if depression sets in with them, the process of public intervention and public control will be repeated. And in any case, nothing can permanently exclude political action with reference to old age and unemployment. The scandalous absence even of public inquiry and statistics is emphasized at present by the displacement of workers through technical developments, and by the lowering, because of speeded-up processes, of the age-limit at which workers can be profitably employed. Unemployment, on the scale on which it now "normally" exists—to say nothing of its extent during cyclic periods of depression—is a confession of the breakdown of unregulated individualistic industry conducted for private profit. Coal miners and even farmers may go unheeded, but not so the industrial city workers. One of the first signs of the reawakening of an aggressive labor movement will be the raising of the unemployment problem to a political issue. The outcome of this will be a further extension of public control.

I have not devoted one of this series of articles to the political phase of the situation because I think that the place of definitely political action in the resolution of the present split in life is fundamental. It is accessory. A certain amount of specific change in legislation and administration is required in order to supply the conditions under which other changes may take place in non-political ways. Moreover, the psychological effect of law is enormous. Political action provides large-scale models that react into the formation of ideas and ideals about all social matters. One sure way in which the individual politically lost, because of the loss of objects to which his loyalties can attach themselves, could recover a composed mind, would be to apprehend the realities of public control of industry and finance, and to give those realities a chance to expel from his mind the debris of lingering aversions, centering usually about the word socialism, and of outmoded affections. To perceive clearly the actual movement of events is to be on the road to intellectual clarity and order.

But perhaps the chief value of political reference is that politics so well exemplify the existing social confusion and its causes. The various expressions of public control to which reference has been made have taken place sporadically and in response to the pressure of distressed groups so large that their voting power demanded attention. They have been improvised to meet special occasions. They have not been adopted as parts of any general social policy. Consequently their real import has not been considered; they have been treated as episodic exceptions. We live politically from hand to mouth. Corporate forces are strong enough to secure attention and action now and then, when some emergency forces them upon us, but acknowledgment of them does not inspire consecutive policy. On the other hand, the older individualism is still sufficiently ingrained to obtain allegiance in confused sentiment and in vocal utterance. It persists to such an extent that we can maintain the illusion that it regulates our political thought and behavior. In actuality, appeal to it serves to perpetuate the confusion in which financial and industrial power, corporately organized, can deflect economic consequences away from the advantage of the many to serve the privilege of the few.

I know of no recent event as politically interesting as President Hoover's calling of industrial conferences after the recent stock-market crash. It is indicative of many things, some of them actual, some of them dimly and ambiguously possible. It testifies to the disturbance created when the prospect of an industrial depression faces a party and administration that have assumed responsibility for prosperity through having claimed credit for it. It testifies to the import of the crowd psychology of suggestion and credulity in American life. Christian Science rules American thought in business affairs; if we can be led to think that certain things do not exist, they perforce have not happened. These conferences also give evidence of our national habit of planlessness in social affairs, of locking the barn-door after the horse has been stolen. For nothing was done until after a crash which every economist—except those hopelessly committed to the doctrine of a "new economic era"—knew was certain to happen, however uncertain they may have been as to its time.

The more ambiguous meaning of these conferences is connected with future developments. It is clear that one of their functions was to add up columns of figures to imposing totals, with a view to their effect on the public imagination. Will there be more than a psychological and arithmetical outcome? A hopeful soul may take it as the beginning of a real application of the engineering mind to social life in its economic phase. He may persuade himself that it is the commencement of the acceptance of social responsibility on a large scale by American industrialists, financiers and politicians. He may envisage a permanent Economic Council growing finally out of the holding of a series of conferences, a council which shall take upon itself a planned coördination of industrial development. He may be optimistic enough to anticipate a time when representatives of labor will meet on equal terms, not for the sake of obtaining a pledge to abstain from efforts to obtain a rise of wages and from strikes, but as an integral factor in maintaining a planned regulation of the bases of national welfare.

The issue is still in the future and uncertain. What is not uncertain is that any such move would, if carried through, mark the acknowledged end of the old social and political epoch and its dominant philosophy. It would be in accord with the spirit of American life if the movement were to be under-

taken by voluntary agreement and endeavor rather than by governmental coercion. There is that much enduring truth in our individualism. But the outcome would surely involve the introduction of social responsibility into our business system to such an extent that the doom of an exclusively pecuniary-profit industry would follow. A coördinating and directive council in which captains of industry and finance would meet with representatives of labor and public officials to plan the regulation of industrial activity would signify that we had entered constructively and voluntarily upon the road which Soviet Russia is traveling with so much attendant destruction and coercion.

I have tried to make a brief survey of the possibilities of the political situation in general, and not to make either a plea or a prophecy of special political alignments. But any kind of political regeneration within or without the present parties demands first of all a frank intellectual recognition of present tendencies. In a society so rapidly becoming corporate, there is need of associated thought to take account of the realities of the situation and to frame policies in the social interest. Only then can organized action in behalf of the social interest be made a reality. We are in for some kind of socialism, call it by whatever name we please, and no matter what it will be called when it is realized. Economic determinism is now a fact, not a theory. But there is a difference and a choice between a blind, chaotic and unplanned determinism, issuing from business conducted for pecuniary profit, and the determination of a socially planned and ordered development. It is the difference and the choice between a socialism that is public and one that is capitalistic.

JOHN DEWEY.

War in the Power Commission

Why the Power Companies Want Mr. King to "Lay Off"

WHEN Solicitor Charles A. Russell of the Federal Power Commission was being examined by Senator Couzens' committee, he said that after he had been with the Commission a short time, Executive Secretary F. E. Bonner of the Commission (an appointee of the present administration)

> told me that I was to talk with M. O. Leighton, who was a Washington lawyer engaged by the Electric Bond and Share Company, and when I saw Leighton he suggested that W. V. King, Chief Accountant of the Commission, was worrying the power companies by requiring elaborate reports. It was his idea that I should tell King that he was not to fret about the details and that the reports of the companies were made to the Commission under oath and should be accepted by the Commission.
>
> Later Bonner gave me to understand that a part of my job was to tell King to lay off the power companies. However, my investigation of the answers which the power companies had made to King's request for additional information seemed to show nothing more than long reports, carefully evading the questions he had asked.

When Mr. Russell informed Mr. Bonner that Chief Accountant King was merely trying to execute the law, Mr. Bonner suggested that he, as Solicitor, might find a way around the law. As an example of the need for careful checking of the companies' accounts, Mr. Bonner stated that more than $30,000,000 of the valuation of $70,000,000 of the Niagara Falls Power Company covers water rights obtained by license from the federal government, although the Federal Water Power Act forbids inclusion of such rights in valuations. He also cited other facts of similar import.

For years, Congress failed to grant the Federal Power Commission adequate funds for its accounting and engineering duties. Last year the appropriation was somewhat increased. But both the power companies and Mr. Bonner have attempted to prevent the accounting staff of the Commission from carrying on its work diligently. One phase of this attempt has been to distribute the accounting in the field to men outside the staff of the Commission itself, men chiefly in the War Department, not under the jurisdiction of Mr. King and not expert in utility matters. Another phase has been to sit on Mr. King himself. There is in this situation the making of a first-class scandal. It also has an important bearing on pending legislation.

The Federal Water Power Act, passed in 1920 after a long struggle, set up a commission to control the granting of licenses for the use of water power in navigable streams, which is owned by the federal government. The Commission consists of the Secretaries of the Interior, War and Agriculture. Under them there is a permanent staff, headed by an executive secretary, and consisting of legal, engineering and accounting forces. The act provides that licenses may be issued to applicants at the Commission's discretion. The plants built by the applicants may be recaptured by the government after fifty years. One of the main functions of the Commission is to determine the value of these plants for recapture. The law sets

forth in some detail how this is to be done. Nothing is to be allowed for water rights or other intangibles. The value is to rest on the actual cost of construction.

The power companies do not like these provisions of the law. They want, of course, to build up as large valuations as possible, in view of the possibility that the government may decide to recapture their plants. But even more important to them is another consideration. It is their habit, in making valuations to be used as the basis of rates by state regulating commissions, to include such things as water rights, to apply what are ordinarily the higher costs of reproduction new, instead of the actual costs of construction, and to boost the valuation by other means. They have been relatively successful in obtaining the approval of state commissions for such valuations, and even more successful in persuading the courts to sustain them. But if the Federal Power Commission makes substantially lower valuations of some of the same properties, the contrast might be duly noted and might lead to discussion.

There is still another reason why they do not want the Power Commission's accountants to delve into their books. Almost none of these companies keeps accurate cost figures of operation. What part of their costs arise from generation, what part from transmission, what part from distribution? What is the real difference in cost between distributing to large consumers of power and to small households? These things, they usually maintain, are impenetrable mysteries. Vague statements about such facts enable the companies to set up their rates about as they please. They do not want to be required to keep their books so as to show costs.

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I agree with Valéry that "the development in Europe, since 1852, of literary works which are extremely difficult, subtle and refined, which are written in a complicated style, and which, for that reason, are forbidden to most readers, bears some relation to the increase in number of literates," and to the consequent "intensive production of mediocre or average works." But I am by no means sure that the future destiny of this difficult and subtle art is to be practised only as a sort of game and with no relation to other intellectual activities. The truth is, I believe, that Valéry's pessimism arises itself from the special point of view which, as I have said, has been associated from the beginning with the kind of literature which Valéry represents.

The disillusion and weariness which we recognize as characteristic of the eighties and nineties were in reality the aspects of a philosophy which, implicit in the literary school of Symbolism, was to come to its full growth and exert its widest influence during the period that followed the War. I do not mean that Symbolism, as an organized movement, went on becoming more and more powerful until it triumphed over all rival movements: the eminence at this particular time of a set of writers—the set of writers discussed in this series—all stemming more or less directly from Symbolism, was unexpected and rather sudden, and it was due largely to extra-literary accidents. The

forth in some detail how this is to be done. Nothing is to be allowed for water rights or other intangibles. The value is to rest on the actual cost of construction.

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period immediately before the War had been characterized, on the whole, by a predominance of naturalistic and social-idealistic literature—the great reputations in England and France had been those of writers like Shaw, Wells and Bennett, Romain Rolland and Anatole France. But with the impoverishment and exhaustion by the War of the European peoples, the disillusion with politics, with all attempts to organize men into social units—armies, parties, nations—in the service of some common ideal, for the accomplishment of some particular end, the Western mind became peculiarly hospitable to a literature indifferent to action and unconcerned with the social group. Many of the socially minded writers, besides, had been intellectually demoralized during the War and had irreparably lost credit in consequence; whereas these others—Yeats, Valéry, Joyce, Proust—had maintained an invulnerable integrity and now fell heir to a prestige which had been sacrificed by other poets, turned maudlin at the same time that they became patriotic, and other novelists, who had exchanged the science of human motives for the intolerance of the rabble-rouser. It had required an heroic independence and an overmastering absorption in literature to remain unshaken by these passions and fears—and in the masterpieces which these scattered and special writers had been producing in the privacy of their detachment while pandemonium raged without, their justification was plain. Furthermore, these masterpieces revealed new discoveries, artistic and psychological: they explored the mysteries of human minds as they seemed never to have been explored before, they made one see the world in a new way. What wonder that, for the generations who survived the War, these writers should have become heroes and leaders?

There are, as I have already said, in our contemporary society, for writers who are unable to interest themselves in it either by studying it scientifically, by attempting to reform it or by satirizing it, only two alternative courses to follow—that of Axël and that of Rimbaud. If one chooses the first of these, the way of Axël, one shuts oneself up in one's own private world, cultivating one's private fantasies, encouraging one's private manias, ultimately preferring one's absurdest chimeras to the most astonishing contemporary realities, ultimately mistaking one's chimeras for realities. If one chooses the second, the way of Rimbaud, one tries to leave Europe or the United States behind—to find the good life in some older civilization, spiritually wiser and less mechanically clever than our own, or in some more barbarous one of a type left behind by democratic institutions and modern manufacturing methods. In these articles, I have been occupied with writers who have, in general, followed the first of these courses; but the period which has followed the War has furnished almost as many examples of writers who have gone in the direction of Rimbaud, without usually, however, like him, going so far as to give up writing itself. All our modern cult, which Wyndham Lewis has denounced, of more primitive places and peoples is really the result of the same impulse as Rimbaud's—D. H. Lawrence's mornings in Mexico and his explorations of Santa Fé and Australia; Blaise Cendrars's Negro anthology, the Negro masks which bring such big prices in Paris, André Gide's early addiction to northern Africa and his more recent navigation of the Congo, Sherwood Anderson's exhilaration at the sound of the dark laughter of the South and the fascination for white New Yorkers of Harlem; and even that strange infatuation with the infantile—because our children are more barbarous than we—which has allowed the term Expressionism to be applied at once to drawings done by the pupils of German schools and to the dramas of German playwrights, which caused Nathalia Crane to be taken seriously and made Daisy Ashford all the rage; that hysterical excitement over modern "primitives" which has led the generation of Jean Cocteau to talk about the douanier Rousseau as their fathers did about Degas—all this has followed in the train of Rimbaud. Yet Lawrence, for all his rovings, must come back to the collieries again; and for Anderson, though he may seek in New Orleans the leisure and ease of the old South, it is the factories of Ohio which still stick in his crop. The Congo masks in Paris are buried in galleries or in the houses of private collectors as completely as if they were sunk among the ruins of their dynasties in the African wilderness, and when white New Yorkers, obstreperous and drunken, visit the Harlem cabarets at night, they find the Negroes, in American business suits, attempting modestly and drearily to conform to the requirements of Western civilization. Our shocking children soon grow up into adults as correct and harmless as their mothers and fathers. Nor do even the greatest souls, the greatest writers—such men as I have been discussing in this series—who have chosen Axël's course, escape the penalty of cutting themselves off from their fellows. The plight of all makes its presence felt, sometimes by giving rise to monstrosities, in the case of every man of imagination who has attempted to ignore it—in Proust's neurosis and in his self-indulgent and intolerable *longueurs;* in Yeats's astrology and spirit tappings and in the seventeenth-century cadence which half puts to sleep his livest prose; in the portentous defense of impossible points of view by Paul Valéry and T. S. Eliot, and in their artistic sterility—not merely the slender output, not merely the casual literary self-expression, of men well occupied elsewhere than in literature—but the distressing sterility of men of genius whose poets' pens are full of power and brilliance, but who spend most of their time pedantically debating in public precisely what poetry is, precisely what function it performs and whether there is any point in writing it at all; even the mystifications by which Joyce, "forging," just within the screen of those mystifications, "the uncreated consciousness" not merely of the Irish,

but of the whole western mind of our time, has allowed his books to remain difficult of access to a public for whom a few chapter headings or prefaces would have made them the mirror of its own lives.

It is true of these later writers that they have not dissociated themselves from society as completely as the original group of Symbolists: they have supplied us, as a matter of fact, with much valuable and interesting social criticism, but it is a criticism which does not aim at anything, it is an exercise—Proust is the great example—of pure intelligence playing luminously all about but not driven by the motor power of any hope and not directed by any creative imagination. If these writers ever indicate a preference for any social order different from the present one, it is invariably for some society of the past as they have read of it in its most attractive authors—as Yeats likes to imagine himself in the role of some great lord and patron of arts of the Italian Renaissance, or as Eliot dedicates his credo to a seventeenth-century Anglican bishop. And this tendency to look to the past, in spite of the revolutionary character of some of their methods, has sometimes given even to their most original work an odd Alexandrian aspect: the productions of Eliot, Proust and Joyce, for example, are sometimes veritable literary museums. It is not merely that these modern novelists and poets build upon their predecessors, as the greatest writers have done in all times, but that they are given to recapitulating them in parodies. When these writers do turn their attention to the contemporary world and its possibilities, it is usually with strange, and even eerie, results. Eliot has recently—explaining by the way, in regard to causes in general, that "we fight rather to keep something alive than in the expectation that anything will triumph"—put forward, or announced his intention of putting forward, a program of classicism, royalism and Anglo-Catholicism; and Yeats, in his astrological "Vision," has predicted the future of Europe as follows:

> A decadence will descend, by perpetual moral improvement, upon a community which may seem like some woman of New York or Paris who has renounced her rouge pot to lose her figure and grow coarse of skin and dull of brain, feeding her calves and babies somewhere upon the edge of the wilderness. The decadence of the Greco-Roman world with its violent soldiers and its mahogany dark young athletes was as great, but that suggested the bubbles of life turned into marbles, whereas what awaits us, being democratic and *primary*, may suggest bubbles in a frozen pond—mathematical Babylonian starlight. . . .
>
> It is possible that the ever increasing separation from the community as a whole of the cultivated classes, their increasing certainty, and that falling in two of the human mind which I have seen in certain works of art is preparation. During the period said to commence in 1927, with the 11th gyre, must arise a form of philosophy which will become religious and ethical in the 12th gyre and be in all things opposite of that vast plaster Herculean image, final *primary* thought. It will be concrete in expression, establish itself by immediate experience, seek no general agreement, make little of God or any exterior unity, and it will call that good which a man can contemplate himself as doing always and no other doing at all. It will make a cardinal truth of man's immortality that its virtue may not lack sanction, and of the soul's reëmbodiment that it may restore to virtue that long preparation none can give and hold death an interruption. The supreme experience, Plotinus' ecstasy of the Saint, will recede, for men—finding it difficult—substituted dogma and idol, abstractions of all sorts of things beyond experience; and men may be long content with those more trivial supernatural benedictions as when Athena took Achilles by his yellow hair. Men will no longer separate the idea of God from that of human genius, human productivity in all its forms.

I believe, therefore, that the time is at hand when these writers, who have largely dominated the literary world of the decade of 1920-30, will no longer be able to serve us as guides. Europe will not always remain disillusioned and despairing, as it will not always remain depleted and poor; and, in the meantime, in any case, the point of view of this European literature of the period since the War is quite inappropriate and infertile for extroverted and prosperous America, where the effect of the War has been a stimulating rather than an enfeebling one. As Europe begins to recover and as America begins to think for herself, the writers of both continents may accept as the only satisfactory solution to their own particular problem the contribution of their abilities to the attempt to solve the general problem of how, by means of our human science, we may, with a minimum of national and class conflict, arrive at a human society international and egalitarian.

Axël's world of the private imagination, isolated from the life of society, seems to have been exploited and explored as far as for the present is possible. Who can imagine this sort of thing being carried further than Valéry and Proust, for example, have done? And who hereafter will be content to inhabit a corner, though fitted out with some choice things of one's own, in the highly individualized vision of one of these masters? On the other hand, it seems equally unsatisfactory, equally impossible, to imitate Rimbaud: we carry with us in our own minds and habits the civilization of machinery, trade, equal rights and democratic education to the Africas and Asias to which we flee, even if we do not find them there before us. Nor can we keep ourselves up very long at home by any of the current substitutes for Rimbaud's solution—by occupying ourselves exclusively with prize-fighters or with thugs or by simply remaining drunk all the time.

The reaction against nineteenth-century Naturalism which Symbolism originally represented has probably now run its full course, and the oscilla-

tion which for at least three centuries has been taking place between the poles of objectivity and subjectivity may return toward objectivity again: we may live to see Valéry, Eliot and Proust displaced and treated with as much intolerance as those writers—Wells, France and Shaw—whom they have themselves displaced and whom they themselves now treat with intolerance. Yet as surely as Ibsen and Flaubert brought to their naturalistic plays and novels the sensibility and language of Romanticism, the writers of a new reaction in the direction of the study of man in his relation to his neighbor and to society will profit by the new intelligence and technique of Symbolism. Or—what would be preferable and is perhaps more likely—this oscillation may finally cease: our conceptions of objective and subjective have unquestionably been based on false dualisms; our materialisms and idealisms alike have been derived from false conceptions of what the researches of science implied—Classicism and Romanticism, Naturalism and Symbolism are, in reality, therefore, false alternatives. We may see Naturalism and Symbolism combine to provide us with a vision of human life and its universe, richer, more subtle, more complex and more complete than any that man has yet known—indeed, they have already so combined in one important masterpiece, "Ulysses"—a little top-heavy, though Joyce may perhaps be, on the symbolistic-subjective side.

I cannot believe, then, with Paul Valéry that Symbolism is doomed to become more and more highly specialized until it shall have been reduced to the status of an intellectual pastime like anagrams or chess. It seems to me far more likely that it will be absorbed and assimilated by the general literature and thought. All the exponents of Symbolism have insisted that they were attempting to meet a need for a new language. "To find a tongue!" Rimbaud had cried. "One has to be an academician—deader than a fossil—to make a dictionary of any language at all." And Valéry himself had followed Mallarmé in an attempt to push to a kind of algebra the classical language of French poetry; Gertrude Stein has explained that her later writings are intended to "restore its intrinsic meaning to literature"; and Joyce, in his new novel, has been attempting to create a tongue which shall go deeper than conscious spoken speech and reflect the processes of the unconscious. It is probably true, as Pater has suggested, that there is something akin to the scientific instinct in the efforts of modern literature to render the transitory phases of "a world of fine gradations and subtly linked conditions, shifting intricately as we ourselves change." In any case, the experiments of men who in their lifetimes have been either received with complete indifference or denounced as practical jokers or madmen may perhaps prove of equal importance with those scattered researches in mathematics and physics which seemed at first merely whimsical exercises on the margins of their subjects, but which have been laid under contribution by the great modern physical systems—without which these could scarcely have been constructed. Mallarmé's poetry, in its time, seemed no more gratuitous and abstruse than Gauss's fourth-dimensional coördinates—yet Mallarmé's work may turn out to have been built upon by writers as considerable in their own field as Einstein in his.

As I have pointed out in writing about Gertrude Stein, our ideas about the "logic" of language are likely to be superficial. The relation of words to what they convey—that is, to the processes behind them and the processes to which they give rise in those who listen to or read them—is still a very mysterious one. It is really no more possible to explain "logically" or "reasonably" the effect on the reader of the language of the realistic novel or even of the technical languages of science than it is to explain the effect of the language of symbolist poetry: the most, apparently, we can say of language is that it indicates relations where we never really understand the nature of the things that are related, and a symbolist poem does this just as much as a mathematical formula does. The only difference between the language of Symbolism and the literary languages to which we are more accustomed is that the former represents subtler and more complex relations—relations perceived recently for the first time and cutting through or underlying those in terms of which we have been in the habit of thinking—and that it deals with them by means of what amounts, in comparison with conventional language, to a kind of literary shorthand. This new language may actually have the effect of revolutionizing our ideas of syntax, as modern philosophy seems to be tending to discard the notion of cause and effect. It is evidently working, like modern scientific theory, toward a totally new conception of reality. This conception, as we find it today in much symbolist literature, seems, it is true, rather formidably complex and sometimes even mystical; but this complexity may presently give rise to some new and radical simplification, when the new conceptions which really lie behind these more and more elaborate attempts to recombine the old have finally begun to be plain. The result may be, not, as Valéry predicts, an infinite specialization and divergence of the sciences and arts, but their finally falling all into one system—a way of thinking and describing experience which will need to use only a single technique and which will make art and science one. Valéry himself seems to have had a vision of something of the kind when he was haunted by the idea of a single "method" common to all departments of thought.

These speculations are, of course, all in the air: they deal with contingencies too remote to calculate. But, in the meantime, if we accept Rimbaud's description of the function of the poet—"to define the quantity of unknown awakening in his time in the universal soul"—we must recognize that the writers with whom these articles have been occupied have

accomplished this, not merely brilliantly and boldly, but, at their best, with an architectural genius, with an intellectual mastery of their materials, superior to that of their romantic predecessors and perhaps comparable to that of the work of any time. And though we are aware in them of things that are dying—the whole belle-lettristic side of Post-Renaissance culture perhaps—we derive from them, also, a vision, and a hope and exaltation which go with it, of the infinite untried possibilities of human thought and art. EDMUND WILSON.

Washington Notes

IT IS difficult to tell at this time which is most unhappy over the tariff mess—the Hoover administration, the anti-Hoover coalition or Senator Smoot, whose soft Utah heart has been bleeding for many months over a party condition that must seem to him too wicked for words. That all three suffer acutely as they survey the situation is too plain to argue about. So far as the coalition is concerned, the complete evaporation of public interest in the tariff measure (never very intense) has taken the heart out of its leaders and destroyed the zest for trampling upon the necks of the Old Guard Senate management. It is a little hard to enjoy a fight when so few care who wins. In addition, the coalition leaders fret over the allegation that the Senate under their controlling combination is unable to function, and that delay in passing the bill is not only damaging to business, but prevents industry from pulling out of the slump that followed the stock-market crash.

So far as the first point is concerned, there does seem to be considerable substance to it. Almost anyone will concede that there is far more strength of parliamentary administration under clear majority control in a two-party government than under the bloc system. Under our scheme a coalition is a combination of responsibility with irresponsibility. It is effective for purposes of negation and obstruction, but not for affirmative action, which accounts in large measure for the unprecedented sluggishness of tariff-bill progress since the Progressive and Democratic combination crushed the regular Republican machine and took charge. Much of the moodiness and irritation in the coalition is due to recognition of its own helplessness. The elements that compose it hold together on one roll call and fly apart in mutually resentful fragments on another. There is no real coalition self-control, which is a natural enough condition and also the basic cause for the slowness of its advance. Coalition leaders themselves recognize this inherent weakness of their alliance which is primarily due, of course, to the temporary nature of their following. The net result is that they are never in a position to know definitely whether they can "deliver" their votes or not.

As to the other point—the one that delay is retarding industrial recovery, which the Hoover spokesmen, journalistic and political, most frequently make against the coalition—I do not agree at all. There are plenty of reasons for the slackness of business, but the failure of the tariff to pass is not one of them. The idea that the business of the country has been for eight months sitting idly down wringing its hands while waiting for Congress to tell it what the rates are so it may go ahead, is a joke. In the first place relatively few businesses of the country were interested or concerned about the tariff changes this trip, and even fewer were so deeply concerned that they were compelled to slow down pending the passage of the bill. So far, no one has been specific about a single such business. The truth is that this allegation against the coalition, which emanates from the White House, is entirely hollow and political. The real damage that is being done is to the prestige of the Hoover administration and the reputation of the Republican party.

As things stand today no one in the Senate, including the so-called coalition leaders, can predict with any degree of confidence when the bill will pass the Senate. As to its ultimate fate, all they can do is guess. It is possible that the bill may go through the Senate by the middle of March. It is equally possible that it may not be passed by that body before the first of May. At the earliest calculation, the conference will consume not less than a month, and hardly anyone with a worth-while judgment thinks the final passage of the conference report through both branches will come before June, if ever. It is conceded by the calmer men of all factions that there is an excellent chance of no bill at all, either as the result of a deadlock in the Conference Committee or through rejection of the conference report by the Senate. The Democratic minority originally entered the coalition with the idea of obtaining a campaign issue out of the passage of a bad bill rather than of a fairly decent one. The unexpected outcome, by which they are largely responsible for the shape of the measure, leaves them with a desire to see it fall at the last ditch. For this reason the Senate rejection of the conference report is a very distinct possibility. The Democrats—or at least a considerable number of them—are anxious to find an excuse for voting against the bill, and they ardently hope it will be given through the restoration of the flexible provision favored by Mr. Hoover. That would be a fine way out for them.

In other words, there is at this writing practically a fifty-fifty chance that the bill will die just before the adjournment of the present session (about the middle of June) which would certainly stamp the whole shooting match—Hoover, coalition and Republican party—as futile and ineffective in the extreme. And it would certainly leave the Republican party exposed to the charge not only of futility but of failure to carry out its campaign promises to agriculture. Whether anybody will care depends almost entirely upon the degree to which business recovers and unemployment disappears. Under Coolidge conditions, with everything selling for twice what it was worth and the goose hanging higher than ever before in history, futility and failure made no unfavorable impression upon the voters. You could not get them interested. They did not expect or want affirmative thought or action upon the part of the administration—and goodness knows they got neither. But things are not the same today. The disposition of the people has become more critical and cantankerous with the slackening of prosperity. Besides, as I have repeatedly said, so much more was expected of the Great Engineer. Some months ago, I reported that the Hoover inner circle felt that if business conditions continued to be

fairly satisfactory, and the naval conference achieved a concrete success, failure of the tariff bill and the hostility of the politicians would do Mr. Hoover no harm. They still think so and they still cling to the hope—and insist—that those two conditions will be fulfilled, but they lack that happy note of confidence which formerly characterized their exposition of the situation.

They are a bit shaky about the future. Considering the present low ebb of the coöperative spirit at London and the unemployment figures at home, this is not strange. Of course, one of the political handicaps of the Hoover administration in the past year is the fact that there has been in Washington the most efficient and effective Democratic publicity bureau that any political party has had in our time. It has magnified every untoward Hoover circumstance and minimized every favorable one. That has been its job and it has done it well and skillfully. That the Republican Committee was without any publicity director at all made the work of the Democrats doubly effective. With the selection three weeks ago of James West, for a number of years Washington representative of the Associated Press, the Republican Committee hopes now to supply the antidote to the Michelson "poison." They are, however, terribly slow in getting started. The fact is that the way in which this publicity business, the value of which it is impossible to exaggerate, has been fumbled by the Hon. Claudius Huston, the Hoover National Committee Chairman, does not indicate that he has much of a grasp on his job. And there are some other things that contribute to the growth of the idea that perhaps this Mr. Huston is a mistake.

Washington. T. R. B.

Mei Lan-fang

Mei Lan-fang and his Company, in Reportory. Forty-ninth Street Theater, February 17, 1930.

WE KNOW how much is, ordinarily, seen in the arts—very little indeed by the average eye; and how much rubbish is talked, rubbish that is somewhat insincere, faddish, imitative, or else fetched up from sentiments within the speaker and not from any perception of the work of art. How much more chance, then, a review of Mei Lan-fang has of being oblique, bluffing or fatuous! In his case more than in most, a criticism is apt to be nere autobiography on the critic's part.

In an art that belongs within the tradition of an old race, and in the presence of an artist considered by them a great artist, a good part of our attendance must be taken up with humility. I spent a fair part of my time, during this performance of the Chinese company, trying merely to learn, as one learns a language. We see what we can, and must be thankful for what perception is granted us. In this performance of Mei Lan-fang I saw enough to see that for me it was the highest point in the season's theater and in any season since Duse's visit and the Moscow Art Theater's production of Chekhov's plays.

As to the Chinese theater, we perceive in the first place that it is an art based on music, or at least musically seen, and is a complete art consisting of music, speech and dancing in the full sense, which includes dance movement, gymnastics, pantomime and gesture. Most of the music was lost on me, of course, with its foreign scale and intention, but I was surprised to find how much of it takes on meaning for an outsider and how often the themes are easily distinguishable. But most of all I was struck by the mingling of music and action that I saw on the stage, the admirable accentuation of gesture by music, the way in which the music gave the tempo to the acting; and by the security of an effect achieved through such delicate means. I could tell, however foreign the music, or rather his tone, by a curious brightness and metal, that Mei Lan-fang's voice was unusual, and that the poetic wholeness of his ar. arose from an astonishing unity of time, tone, emotional rhythm and bodily control.

This Chinese art is, in the second place, stiffened and syllabled with conventions; some of which are familiar to us and thought of largely with naïve, indulgent humor, but many of which, not known at all, underlie, like an alphabet, the entire theatrical occasion. The masks of these faces, painted with black predominating where fierceness is to be symbolized, with blue for cruelty, red for the heroic, and so on; the stage properties, where moving a chair may imply another apartment, through whose imaginary door you bend to pass; the duster of horse hair, denoting the divine, the heroic, the holy; the whip standing for the horse; the usages for the sleeve; the use of the eyes, hands; the prologue on the actor's entrance, the couplet following; there are these and numberless other conventional symbols. Foreigners seize on them for harmless discussions—the easiest way out of so far-off an art, and we can read of them in the voluminous notes supplied by George Kin Leung for the brochure of information that is given out with the programs. We cannot dwell upon them here, but it is interesting to consider their relation to us. There is one element to them, the visual, that we can take for the esthetic qualities obviously present. The other element in them—whether we know their implications or not—is the symbolistic. When purely symbolistic, these conventions represent—without reproducing—ideas, actions, things, exactly as words do, which in themselves are nothing but sound. There is this difference, however, between these symbols and words: a movement or object symbolizing a beautiful idea, personage, place, tends to be created into something in itself more beautiful and worthy of the association, whereas a word remains the same, plus perhaps our efforts to put beauty into its employment. These conventions in themselves have doubtless, therefore, taken on a greater and greater perfection.

It is interesting, also, to note the Greek and Elizabethan parallels in this Chinese theater, the obvious and slighter Elizabethan ones, mostly theater mechanics, the more profound Greek characteristics. One of these Greek similarities consists of the scenes, developed over and over again and falling into types, the Parting Scenes, Recognition Scenes, Ironic Scenes, and so on. The other is the method, practised always by the Greeks—a method that is based on our physical nature—we rise to song with an access of vitality—and that has always seemed to me inevitable in the highest development of the theater—I mean the rising into music where the pitch of the dramatic idea and emotion seems to require it.

It is interesting to note the antiquity of this Chinese theater, going back almost thirty centuries perhaps, the continuity and innovations in its history, its deep relation to the Chinese soul, the innovations and inventions that are credited to Mei Lan-fang; and to note the fact that the Chinese see these plays from time to time throughout their lives, which means listening to and learning a perfection, —something like great music heard many times, always different, always the same—which is one of the signs of excellence in any work of art, and of sophistication rather than semi-barbarism in a theater public.

Of Mei Lan-fang himself, such facts as that he is the greatest actor in China, a public idol, with the highest honors, "The Foremost of the Pear Orchard" and the head of the Ching-Chung Monastery, that he was an accomplished musician at seven, a success in feminine roles at twelve, and that his house, collections and position in Chinese culture today are known over China—these things we can read in a hundred places.

Taking him—in the way an actor as a dramatic medium must be taken—as we take a musical instrument or the pigment for a painter, we see that Mei Lan-fang is of medium height, slender, with sure, close-knit muscles, small, supple wrists, superb support in the waist—from which the fine movements and gestures of the torso proceed—a remarkable control of the neck, and perfect poise and suspension in the ankles. His face is the classic Chinese oval, with highly expressive eyes. His make-up, that overlay of carmines and darker tones, is the most beautiful I have ever seen in the theater. The diction is sharp and always pointed. The famous hands are curiously like those in Botticelli, Simone Martini and other painters of the fifteenth century. They are rather tense in form, with long fingers, squarish-tipped; not so much our ideal of the hand, which is based on the sixteenth century of Rubens and Van Dyke, but incredibly trained in the conventions and dance of the Chinese actor's art. And even with no knowledge of that art, you can see with what perfection he begins his speech, prolongs the word that gives the musicians the cue to begin, retards the words by which the music is warned to stop.

For our purposes, however, it seems to me that all this is unimportant compared to one point that bears on all art basically. I mean the relation of the art of Mei Lan-fang —the greatest in his field—to reality. That question of the relation of art to reality is the greatest of all questions with regard to art. It parallels—to employ the terms closest to us humanly—the relation of the spirit to the body, or, to invert the two terms, of the passing to the permanent, the casual in the moment to the flower of it.

On this subject much has been written about Chinese art and about this actor that is misleading. We will stick to Mei Lan-fang. About this actor we are told to note his impersonation of women and his impersonation of various emotions. Words are weak and dependent things, and nothing could be more confusing than these are likely to be. In the first place, there is no attempt to impersonate a woman. The female roles are the most important in the Chinese theater; and he, in the kind of female role that he presents, strives only to convey the essence of the female quality, with all its grace, depth of feeling, its rhythm of tenderness and force. This distillation of the material he employs into its inherent and ideal qualities, Mei Lan-fang does with an economy both brilliant and secure, a studious care, delicacy and inner music. The impression is one of a perfection, at once fragile and secure, that is astonishing.

But even more important—the Chinese critics have already often warned us about the female roles—even more important for us is the matter of his realism in general. I found myself most impressed in this regard during the piece from the Ming Dynasty, where the princess stabs the general who had destroyed her family, and then kills herself with his sword. This seemed to me more satisfying than the play about the husband's return, for in the last it was easy to see the movement away from the older, high style. What we must say about the realism and abstraction and stylization of Mei Lan-fang's art is that, exactly as is the case in the classic Chinese art, we are astonished at the precision of its realistic notations and renderings, and are dazzled by the place these take in the highly stylized and removed whole that the work of art becomes. These movements of Mei Lan-fang, that way he has of keeping the whole body alive, even in the stillest moments of the action, of putting that continuous movement or vibration into the head as it springs from the neck; that voice that in its sheer tone moves away from actuality; that sophisticated, poetic use of the eyes, those expressions of fear, pity, murderous resolution, despair, and so on, that come over his face; none of these is impersonation or reality in the usual sense. They are real only in the sense that great sculptures or paintings are real, through their motion in repose, their impression of shock, brief duration and beautiful finality. Every now and then—very rarely—in acting we see this happen: I mean a final creation, free from merely incidental matter, of an essential quality in some emotion, the presentation of that truth which confirms and enlarges our sense of reality. But I have never seen it so securely and repeatedly achieved as in Mei Lan-fang.

STARK YOUNG.

CORRESPONDENCE

Skyscrapers and the Regional Plan

SIR: Because of my respect for the opinion of The New Republic, I am venturing to write and point out a misunderstanding on which the editorial [on the New York Regional Plan] in your issue of January 28 is based. You will admit that it is easy for a misunderstanding to arise regarding our attitude on high buildings, when no further information is available than is contained in a press report limited to one phase of a very complicated subject. Inconsistent as it may appear, the fact that our first statement emphasizes the continuation of skyscraper buildings on 25 percent of the lot, means that the main emphasis will be placed on the need of restriction of the greater area forming 75 percent. In our view, from 15 to 20 percent of this balance should not be built upon.

Having regard to the fact that height and bulk limits in Manhattan will be restricted by economic forces in connection with transportation, we believe that the erection of high towers on 25 percent of each lot will lessen density and create more light and air about buildings on the remaining 75 percent. We admit that this conclusion has been arrived at by a long study of factors which will have to be presented before we can expect their acceptance.

The illustration to which you refer was for a municipal build-

ing, which we think should be considered quite independently of any other building in the city. If New York is to have predominance in its civic center, it can only be obtained in the manner we have indicated. Your statement leads to misunderstanding in assuming that this exceptional building is put forward as an example for other parts of the city.

It is also an error to say that our report advises that there should be no limitation on height. While it has been necessary to approach the question of high buildings first in regard to whether there should be any limitation of the present unlimited height on 25 percent, I think you do us an injustice in saying that the major emphasis is on this feature because it happens to be the one on which our general conclusions have been presented. In face of public opinion, it would never have done for the Regional Plan to put forward proposals for limiting 75 percent to the extent it considers necessary, had it not expressed itself first regarding the desirability of using the 25 percent for a maximum height, as at present.

You ask who is to be responsible for the proper spacing of tall buildings. The only answer is that the Board of Estimate is now responsible and will continue to be, although we hope with the aid of a proper city-planning commission in the future. It will be as easy for them to conform to our proposals as it is for them to carry out the existing zoning law, if they become persuaded that we are right. There is no constitutional or legal difficulty in their doing so. Any impediment will arise solely from the pressure which the taxpayers may exert in favor of excessive bulks. We consider that there is a limitation to skyscraper building, which will operate in restricting the area given to unlimited heights, sufficiently to prevent overtaxing of facilities beyond the extent to which they will be overtaxed anyway—whatever restrictions are imposed. Only in those cases where towers have a good advertising value is it worth while for builders to erect towers like the Chrysler Building, and there need be no fear that these will be so numerous as to add to bulk to a greater extent than would be the case with ten-story buildings.

You ask who is to bear the cost of the surrounding spaces or lower buildings. I can only cite one or two of many facts that will indicate that this cost is now being borne by owners of buildings. The owners of the Manhattan Life Building have paid over $700,000 for the air rights over adjacent five-story buildings; and the Equitable Life has a 21-year lease, for which it pays a rent, over the Morgan Bank. The economic basis for this is indicated by the fact that offices and apartments having open situations have a much higher rental value than those that are crowded and dark. For instance, apartments facing the East River, and even the small Gramercy Park, are worth 50 percent more per room owing to their open views. It seems reasonable that those who erect very high buildings should pay more in taxes, and we have Mr. Lawson Purdy's evidence that they do so already, so substantially that there is less loss to owners erecting low buildings than is usually assumed. There is a reason, however, why the public should help to secure open spaces about high buildings. An instance of this is Gramercy Park, which perhaps produces as much revenue to the city from the increased assessments given to adjacent property as it would produce if it were built upon. That is why the city should help to add to open areas. I agree with you that skyscrapers should pay more than they do for the light and air they enjoy as a result of adjacent open spaces and lower buildings.

THOMAS ADAMS,
New York City. General Director of Plans and Survey.

[The New Republic is planning to publish in the near future an article by Mr. Lewis Mumford, in which the points raised in Mr. Adams' letter, and the other aspects of the Regional Plan's proposals, will be discussed at length.—THE EDITORS.]

An Institute on Social Insurance

SIR: On March 1 and 2 there will be held at 7 East Fifteenth Street, New York City, under the auspices of the Rand School and the Socialist party, an institute on Social Insurance. The first session will be held at two o'clock on the afternoon of March 1. Experts on the various forms of insurance,—unemployment, old age, accident, etc.,—will take part, but it is hoped that the occasion will be one for the free expression and exchange of opinion on the part of the audience. Naturally, the bill recently introduced in Albany will be discussed in detail.

New York City. WILLIAM E. BOHN.

"Nullification At Home"

SIR: In commenting on "Nullification at Home" [The New Republic, February 12], the editorial statement that "if one is a sincere prohibitionist . . . he must believe the making and use of home brew as reprehensible as making and selling alcoholic beverages" illustrates the amazing brevity of historic memory. It is but few years since the prohibition campaigns were on—I have lived and shared in them in three states—and in them all, as in all others that I have known about, the fight has been a distinctively *anti-saloon* fight. Even if some of the leaders of the Anti-Saloon League itself have recently allowed themselves to be maneuvered into a position of seeming to attempt to "enforce by law a standard of personal conduct," this has simply been due to their ineptitude.

Of the thirty or more states that had adopted prohibition before the Eighteenth Amendment, it is doubtful if one could have been carried by those who were "sincere" prohibitionists" under The New Republic's definition. Large numbers of people who occasionally drank and kept liquors in their homes, perhaps served them to guests, eventually came to support prohibition because they believed the American saloon to be an intolerable evil, and after the exhaustive trial of hopeless failure of every conceivable sort of "regulation," complete abolition seemed to be the only alternative.

If this incidentally made it awkward for many people (themselves included) to continue their personal habits unchanged, that is only the inevitable result of any fundamental change of public policy. What was directly aimed at, however, was not personal habits, but the *commercialized liquor traffic*, which not only made and sold liquor, but, in pursuit of profit, habitually hesitated at no crime of any type or magnitude whatever.

H. H. SWAIN.

Helena, Mont.

The Problem of Detention Homes

SIR: Will you extend to your readers an invitation to assist us in the new nation-wide study of detention on which the National Probation Association has recently embarked? The study is planned to cover a period of two years and is financed by the Bureau of Social Hygiene established by Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. The need for this study is evidenced by the confusion of ideas existing as to what constitutes detention. The original idea in providing detention homes for children was to prevent them from being held in jails or police stations. It was hoped in this way to keep the child safe until a proper disposition of his case had been made. Today we find many examples of detention homes being used for correctional purposes and the care of children who should be at home.

It is our desire in making the study of detention facilities in the United States to ascertain the best methods of meeting the needs of the individual child. To arrive at a well defined conclusion calls for a careful, painstaking study of private and public detention homes, boarding homes and the relation of probation, jails and police departments, as well as the social agencies in each community, to problems of detention.

In addition to the material we shall collect from these sources we should like to have the readers of The New Republic express their opinions on the dangers and favorable aspects of detention. We should welcome accounts of interesting experiences and programs in connection with detention. A frank appraisal of the situation "as others see it" will be of great assistance to us in making the study. Replies to this letter may be addressed to the writer at the Graduate School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago.

HARRISON A. DOBBS,
Chicago, Ill. Director, Detention Home Study.

Art in America

Art in America, by Suzanne La Follette. New York: Harper and Brothers. 361 pages. $5.

MISS LA FOLLETTE'S book is the first attempt that has been made to give a complete and comprehensive picture of the development of the arts in America. Her work is a genuine success; and I call upon the spirits of James Jackson Jarves, our first art critic of distinction, and Montgomery Schuyler, our first intelligent critic of architecture, to say nothing of Emerson and Bascom, our first thinkers on esthetics, to add their plaudits to my own.

How difficult Miss La Follette's task was, only those who have surveyed the field can know. There is, to begin with, no adequate critical history of either painting or sculpture in America; the few books that hold the field have as their chief distinction their lack of any rivals. Until a few years ago no one had made an attempt to treat as a whole the architectural history of America; and while Mr. Talbot Hamlin's survey was a broad one, there are still large tracts, like that between 1870 and 1900, where one must rely upon travel and chance photographs and childhood memories for anything like a picture of the period. The minor industrial arts have their histories: Bennington pottery, Stiegel glass, hooked rugs and samplers and quilts have all received attention during the last twenty years; but, beyond the early work of Duncan Phyfe, there is no history of furniture in the United States, although by no means everything between 1830 and 1930 can be dismissed as either base or imitative.

In short: the spadework necessary for a general survey has not half been done; and Miss La Follette, accordingly, has had not merely to marshal together a great army of material, but to recruit a good deal of it by her personal efforts. That she accomplished the task at all is no little cause for satisfaction; and that she has done it with the sure and brilliant touch, the justness and the decent discrimination that mark the present work, is a sign that scholarship in America is now in a happier state than it was when Mr. J. E. Spingarn pointed to its shortcomings in 1922.

So much for the magnitude of the task: let us now consider the method. To write a social and economic history of the arts in America would require only the ability to recognize the material and to link it with the forces that were at work in the past: the guild, the village community, the pioneer, the merchant captain, the industrialist, the corporation, and all the habits and folkways that accompanied these economic phenomena. Miss La Follette does not lose sight of this aspect of art; she recognizes the way in which these social forces condition the arts and give them certain specific material to work on; but she goes much farther than this, for she deals with the human and esthetic worth of the final product, as well as the intermediate steps in society that led to or permitted its creation. Her judgments here are sensitive and well weighed; they are not the rote presentation of informed opinion, as in so many histories of art, but fresh attempts at analysis and appreciation.

While inevitably, in reflecting on contemporary figures, I find myself putting different values on the painters and architects from those Miss La Follette assigns, the difference does not come from reaction against any dogmatism of the author's, but from the fact that the place of certain artists cannot be easily settled, and, apart from this, because in the very nature of temperament there will always be people who hate the personality of Rubens and love Botticelli, or who disdain the cold precision of Versailles and admire the hard energy of Notre Dame. Miss La Follette likes Georgia O'Keefe's architectural paintings and I like her flower forms better: now who shall arbitrate? Fortunately, Miss La Follette opens the door to fresh appreciations; and as long as the door is open I have no desire to leave the house!

There is still another virtue in "Art in America," as Mr. Walter Pach points out in his introduction, which is that Miss La Follette has endeavored sympathetically to understand her material: not belittling it like a Colonial who is overawed by the excellence of Europe's highest moments; not bragging about its nonentities like a provincial patrioteer who thinks that art is a good makeweight for ammunition, and who superstitiously regards the offal that is dropped by the Sacred Cow of nationalism as superior for human consumption to the milk that is produced by other countries; nor yet possessed by the crotchet, so popular as a defensive mechanism among uneasy Europeans, to the effect that though Ford cars can flourish in America, art, by definition, has never sprouted a seed in this barren soil. In other words, Miss La Follette has good sense and a nicely balanced mind; and what she proves is what history proves: namely, that art has had its good and its bad moments in America, and that it is today in probably as healthy a state as literature or science, to say nothing of industrialism. And just as we have in the past had our Joseph Henrys and Willard Gibbses to put alongside the Clerk Maxwells and Kelvins, so we have had a Ryder or an Eakins to put alongside a Redon or a Courbet, a Richardson to place beside a Bentley, or a Roebling to measure up with a Paxton or an Eiffel.

In all her major evaluations Miss La Follette has put the artists in the places which, I think, they will eventually occupy. She sees the greatness of Eakins and the fatuity, to say nothing of the plastic weakness, of Sargent; she upsets Mr. Fiske Kimball's perverse interpretation of the progress of modern architecture and demolishes his silly attempt to supplant the virile modern design initiated by Sullivan and Mr. Frank Lloyd Wright by the feeble classicism of his favorite Fifth Avenue apartment house; she recognizes the extent to which Mr. Thomas Benton and Mr. Boardman Robinson tower over the empty mural painters our successful architects delight to honor and aid. While I regret that Miss La Follette did not include either modern photography or the wood engraving of the eighties or engineering in her survey, and while I feel that she perhaps misses the historic importance of Richardson and overemphasizes the actual effect of Saarinen's Chicago Tribune design, I am too conscious of the general excellence of "Art in America" to look upon these as critical defects.

This is not merely the first adequate history of the arts in America; it supplants, at least for the general reader, all the existing special volumes. Our philanthrophic foundations which seek to promote the cause of the arts in this country could do much worse with their funds than to subsidize a cheap popular edition of this handsomely illustrated book. "Art in America" gives one a sense of the latent wealth of our past, and of the continuous energy that has poured into our present, however wastefully that energy spills over for lack of proper social channels to run in. As for the future, it is in the balance, and not the least happy of Miss La Follette's strokes is the fact that she leaves it there.

LEWIS MUMFORD.

The Physical Culture King

Bernarr Macfadden: A Study in Success, by Clement Wood. New York: Lewis Copeland Company. 314 pages. $3.

The True Story of Bernarr Macfadden, by Fulton Oursler. New York: Lewis Copeland Company. 281 pages. $2.50.

Chats With the Macfadden Family, by Grace Perkins. New York: Lewis Copeland Company. 228 pages. $2.50.

IT IS indeed amazing to discover just how important Bernarr Macfadden is. I, for one, had no idea that he was included among the world's Great Thinkers. But Mr. Clement Wood, who has outlined the available knowledge of mankind, assures us that "The social value of his work soars skyhigh over the combined achievements of Rockefeller, Chandler, Woolworth, Ford, Firestone and Giannini, and exceeds that of Edison." He is, moreover, "an ideal American leader of thought." He has, says Wood, more influence on our living than Darwin, Einstein and Freud. (Mr. Oursler would have it that Macfadden anticipated Freud in all important respects.) Indeed, the American intellectuals, at whom Messrs. Wood and Oursler direct some hearty sneers, have been singularly amiss in neglecting to appreciate this powerful mind.

Macfadden was born near Mills Spring, Missouri, in 1868, and now thrives at his home in Englewood, New Jersey (for pictures see the books of Perkins and Oursler), and at his office, 1926 Broadway (for pictures see *ibid*). His youth was spent in the direst poverty, his father being an habitual drunkard, as his biographers are careful to point out—for there is a moral to be drawn—and his mother a sickly woman of a poor family. Macfadden's father died when his son was a mere child, and the boy was put out to work in a cheap hotel run by distant relatives. Thereafter he led a wandering and difficult life, working at times as a farm hand, a bookkeeper, a bill collecter, a helper in a coal mine, a window-curtain cleaner etc., etc. His schooling was meager. When his mother followed his father into an early grave, Bernarr overheard his relatives say that he was not long for this world. But Bernarr resolved to trick the Almighty out of his just due and Get Strong. By a series of fortunate accidents he discovered physical culture and gymnasiums. Saving his pennies carefully, he purchased a membership in one of the latter (he had experimented with dumbbells at home) and quickly became a living marvel of physical perfection. He gave particular attention to wrestling, and with astonishing celerity reached a point where he was able to defeat local champions of all weights. He was a celebrity and tried to cash in on it by establishing a gymnasium of his own. But he discovered that he needed some education, so for several seasons he worked as a physical instructor in small private and public schools, taking instruction in the rudiments of knowledge as part payment. He then returned to the gymnasium business, but finding the field limited in nether Missouri, he resolved to invade the East.

He stopped in New York and there he has remained practically ever since. He landed there with $50 and his Big Idea. He first set up a gymnasium and met with a mild success. None of the newspapers would take his articles on health, which sorely perplexed his spirit. To piece out his income he became salesman and demonstrator for a patent exerciser, touring the United States and eventually visiting England. While there he tried the experiment of issuing a flier containing brief articles on physical culture and some advertising matter about the exerciser. Though he gave it away at his meetings, he marked a price on it and also stated that he would receive subscriptions. Some subscriptions actually came in. Forthwith he returned to America and started to issue Physical Culture at five cents a copy. This was in 1898. It's still going strong.

All of Macfadden's ideas found expression in Physical Culture. Of course, it hasn't taken him thirty-two years to get them into print. They are few and simple. But he has, to an unusual degree, a capacity for dramatizing his ideas, and the ramifications of his publications are more or less facets of his central core. Macfadden believes in physical culture, *i. e.*, systematic exercise and proper diet for health, and fasting and hydrotherapy for the cure of disease. He is convinced that these ideas are the sum total of human wisdom so far as Keeping Fit goes. Through a combination of them all he believes that the human body (which, like Ziegfeld, he glorifies) can be kept in the pink of condition. With a fit body, success is yours, *i. e.*, you can make plenty of money. It naturally follows that Macfadden is an implacable enemy of doctors and of all medical science in the ordinary sense. Why, indeed, should he have anything to do with doctors when by exercise, proper diet, fasting and hydrotherapy he can cure syphilis, asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, heart disease, paralysis and cancer? This selective list alone should convince the most skeptical reader of this review that Macfadden is without doubt America's master mind.

How does this mind work? His sympathetic observers show us admirably. He was in poor health, weak physically, and regained his health and strength through exercise and dieting; *ergo,* physical training and dieting are the universal panaceas for the human race. He was once very ill from an unskillful vaccination; *ergo,* vaccination is anathema to him. He tried patent medicines as a boy and they did him no good; *ergo,* patent medicines are worthless. He was brought up in the country; *ergo,* the country type is the ideal. His father died of drink; *ergo,* he declared war on alcohol. Under the pressure of the advances of science, so Macfadden has observed, physicians have discarded past treatments as inadequate. Macfadden, therefore, concludes that most of present medical practice is also bunk and attacks it.

As a boy, Macfadden read a great deal of romantic fiction. He has never cared much for the finer products of literary art. And since they worked, *i. e.*, satisfied him, he concluded that romantic fiction was what the public liked. But to be useful it must be true and point a definite and respectable moral. With these principles in mind, he started his magazine True Stories. These stories are written, so both Mr. Wood and Mr. Oursler assure us insistently, by persons to whom the episodes actually happened. They are, as Mr. Wood acutely points out in reference to Macfadden's early reading, chances for ordinary individuals to indulge in self-pity. And they teach the unsuspecting the horror of life in this world. They teach the timid the benefits of their position by emphasizing the terrible results of a misstep. They are moral. Offensively so, as you can determine by reading one or two.

Macfadden fiction is in the tradition of Bertha M. Clay. This would be obvious to anyone who ever, in his youth or out of idle curiosity, had read Miss Clay. And it is not surprising to find that one of Macfadden's earliest retainers in the fiction business was John R. Coryell, author of the genuine Nick Carter and Bertha M. Clay novels (cf. The Bookman for July, 1929). Coryell turned out some serials for Macfadden in the years before the former's death, for while the short narratives are by persons telling

their own experiences, the serials are by professionals. It takes a trained hand to write a sustained narrative full of cleverly arranged suspenses. And mention of Coryell brings us to matters in which Macfadden has, so his biographers say, been genuinely useful.

Coryell once wrote a serial called "Wild Oats," which purported to exhibit dangers inherent in sowing these same oats. When published in Physical Culture, this narrative came to the eyes of Anthony Comstock, who moved for its suppression. Macfadden was fined $2,000 and sentenced to two years in jail. President Taft arranged that the jail sentence be squelched, but the $2,000 was never recovered, and in fighting his case over a period of two years, Macfadden lost $100,000. This was not Macfadden's first brush with Comstock. One of his early physical beauty contests also aroused Comstock's ire, for women appeared clad in long knit union suits, draped with sashes so that their figures might be well set off, but not nude. Comstock fainted, but Macfadden fought.

His contributions have been many, but related. He started the war on patent medicines, though others finished it and get the credit, say Wood and Oursler. He fought the corset successfully. He was the first to emphasize the proper respect due the human body as the house of the soul. He was one of the first to insist that the human form divine was not obscene. He was a leader in printing straight talk about the ravages of venereal disease. These contributions to American culture have been incidental, to be sure, to the preaching of his central doctrines. And that preaching has gone on in many places, even in the pages of his principal daily, The Graphic. For the aim and object of The Graphic is to teach morality, health and common sense about living, whether it be a matter of personal conduct or international relations.

But Mr. Oursler lets the cat out of the bag when he writes, "The public knew exactly what it wanted, and Macfadden was giving it to them." That, I take it, is the secret of his success. C. HARTLEY GRATTAN.

Dance of the Machines

The Dance of the Machines: The American Short Story and the Industrial Age, by Edward J. O'Brien. New York: The Macaulay Company. 274 pages. $2.50.

CERTAINLY the problem of man's relation to the machine is not settled. It is only just becoming possible to define it. A great portion of the world's people are only now being reached by machinery: even in the United States and Europe its ultimate direction and essential structure are just visible. And artists certainly as much as—perhaps even more than—any other self-conscious group are affected by the new life of industrialized mechanization.

There is a new esthetic: those qualities in art which once made it of the profoundest human worth, because it brought humans into a primary relation to an absolute of God or Beauty, are now merely decorative, pleasant or amusing, and nearly always esoteric. The absolutes have vanished and their memory is retained only by a narrowing group of specialists: artists, critics and *cognoscenti*. The bulk of humanity has its esthetic reaction (a true one, I am convinced) from certain fine things in its own modern world: the speed, the complexity and the wonderful, logical activity of the radio, the automatic telephone, the airship. It is a pity, then, that Mr. O'Brien, having chosen to use his really considerable talent in a discussion of art and the machine (the short story here is the symbol of all art), should have done so in such a fragmentary, partial, thoughtless and uninformed manner as to make his whole work worthless.

Mr. O'Brien's theses are the regimentation of man by the machine and its produce, and his final enslavement to the machine which he tends. Neither, of course, is new, and the present volume adds nothing to the statements previously made by William Morris and Samuel Butler. But the situation is new, or at least so deeply changed and clarified as to make the present interpretation inadequate. It is no longer sufficient to see the machines as the source merely of simple consumers' goods, competitively produced. The whole trend of modern industrialism, capitalistic as well as communistic, denies this. The effect of machinery on humans Mr. O'Brien sees also as clear and simple: humanity, through its service to the machine, becomes machine-like itself: the great magazines, controlled by their advertisers, require a uniform and shoddy product, degrading to writers and their work. (The short story is the symbol of all art.) Mr. O'Brien has discovered only two contemporary Americans of first-rate literary worth, Hemingway and Sherwood Anderson. Neither, he says, has found possible a fruitful existence in the industrial United States. And this suggests a weakness, not in the men, but in society; the naïve solution is a return to simple individualism and *laissez faire*, as if the whole logic of history could be altered by a word.

"The Dance of the Machines" is marred by its insistent, didactic style. Ideas of the most painful simplicity—the mechanical accuracy of the machines, the sexual-reproductive metaphor of their increase—are defended with shrewdness, and vigor. Mr. O'Brien concludes his book with a parody short-story contest reprinted from Vanity Fair, and a bibliography which may or may not be also a parody. MELVIN P. LEVY.

Tilted Moons

Tilted Moons, by S. Foster Damon. New York: Harper and Brothers. 90 pages. $2.

MR. DAMON has an agreeable gift, the restrictions of which he is not always willing to accept. In the present volume, as in its predecessor, he not only includes those sharply carved and pointedly phrased verses with which he is most successful, but also a number of more experimental pieces which he does not carry off so well. The result is that the talent exhibited in this volume is one which the reader is inclined to define by its limitations rather than by its achievements.

For Mr. Damon's gift is fanciful rather than imaginative, witty rather than profound. His best pieces, such as "Encounter" and "Family Portrait," make their effect at once, an effect which Mr. Damon is sometimes particularly successful in obtaining; he hints at strong feeling, and then bites it off with irony:

> Then I remembered how I lived alone,
> Writing bad poems and eating out my heart
> All for your beauty.—How the time has flown!

This is, of course, something that other poets have done before: one of the reasons why Donne, for instance, appeals so much to the complication of the modern mind is that we get an impression from many of his poems that he is savagely gnawing his own heart; the same thing hap-

pens with Hamlet's soliloquies. But Donne and Shakespeare, by the very intensity with which they accomplish this apparently corrosive act, only increase the emotion; the passion and the bitterness are of the same strength, and reinforce, rather than counteract, each other. Indeed it is this reinforcement of emotion by the ordinarily destructive mind that makes metaphysical poetry successful.

But Mr. Damon's poetry, which tends to be metaphysical (there are traces of Emily Dickinson in it) lacks the intensity to fuse these contradictory elements. The result is wit, in the contemporary rather than in the seventeenth-century meaning of the word. The mind *is* destructive, and though the poem may be sharp and clear, what we remember is not the strength of its emotion, but the mental agility and verbal cleverness with which it is expressed. His best poems, by producing almost their full effect at the first reading, do not leave any lasting mark in the mind; they sound, but they do not reverberate; they are single notes, rather than chords.

It is the weakness exemplified by this fact, a weakness composed of insufficient intensity and "literary" phraseology (the latter, of course, being the surest symptom of the former), that makes it easy to criticize Mr. Damon's poetry adversely. And to do so entirely is, as I have already suggested, unfair. For it is only when he tries to stretch his talent beyond its capacity that he breaks down. He is at his best in the conventional forms such as the sonnet and the octosyllabic couplet, which by their strictness sharpen his thought and its expression. In these he frequently accomplishes poems of an admirable, neat clearness, which bear the impression of no personality but his own, and whose ease and fluency seem to be the result, not of a suspicious facility, but of a sound knowledge of words and form.

THEODORE SPENCER.

A Modern Morality

New Year's Eve, a Play, by Waldo Frank. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 152 pages. $2.

THE material of Waldo Frank's play, "New Year's Eve," is not so very different from that of Ibsen's "Ghosts." In the early play, a woman denies the truth within her—her love for a man not her husband—in the name of duty, and thereby causes the tragedy of her son's life; in the Frank play, a woman denies her love for the sake of her children, as well as for the supposed unworthiness of her lover, and causes the tragedy of almost an entire generation. "Ghosts," however, is essentially a thesis play; "New Year's Eve" essentially a religious play. The method of the first is logical and dramatic, and its characters are more or less individual; the method of the latter is intellectual and rhapsodic, and its characters are all more or less symbolical. If we miss the social connotations of the Ibsen play, all that is left is a story; if we fail to perceive the moral implications of the Frank play, what is left is a certain quality of feeling.

This quality of feeling in "New Year's Eve" is exaltation. It explains and justifies the use of its solemn and sometimes Biblical speech. It gives the play's characters a dimension they might otherwise lack. It saves the play from a dryness and a deadness that ordinarily would result from the formality of its structure and the Q. E. D.-ness of its dénouement. It makes of what might have been a mere mechanism for the projection of an idea a stirring artistic organism.

For the characters here are not personalities, they are states of mind. They are completely and constantly possessed by their single moods. Thus, the very intensity of these moods serves to isolate them from one another. These people do not seem to pass through a series of events, but to give to all events an almost identical significance. Because they are unchangeable, they do not appear to move, and the play's characteristic tone, because of this, is one of static ecstasy. Hence its atmosphere of timelessness within time and its fundamental oneness. In retrospect, the characters resemble figures in primitive works of art: they seem to have been seized and formed while enacting some gesture of exaltation. Their strange immobility lends them a kind of awkward rigidity, but the artist's emotion and profound conviction make them live.

The humble little people of what might merely have been a family drama, seen in this light, now take on almost heroic contours. And the play's defects, viewed as ordinary realism, become part of its originality from the standpoint of a possible theatrical style. "New Year's Eve" is a modern morality play, and should be read and produced as such. Its immediate milieu is not the wall-papered rooms which the stage-directions call for, but a bare playing-space of which ideally the background may be the towers of the big city, as the cathedral was the background of the medieval morality. Its people do not smoke pipes and cigarettes as the author would have it, but in all simplicity perform their hieratic motions. The wife's confession of guilt is no domestic crisis, but a kind of mystery; her husband's suffering no mere personal tragedy, but a Passion; his acceptance of the truth at the end is a sort of apotheosis—Everyman's redemption.

Like the old moralities, "New Year's Eve" is crude, naïve, gauche, passionate and impressive withal. For the theater, its general importance is that it adds to the new tradition of plays on themes suggested by contemporary life which attempts to create a modern ethos in a kind of myth form. For literature, the play is important as one of its author's most successful efforts outside the field of critical writing.

HAROLD CLURMAN.

Notes on Novels

Australia Felix, by Henry Handel Richardson. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. $2.50.

THIS novel is the first volume of a notably important trilogy, called in its entirety "The Fortunes of Richard Mahony," which has already been introduced to American readers through the publication last September of "Ultima Thule." That book, the final volume, achieved its great and deserved success read as a detached novel; in the present volume the reader meets Richard shortly after he has come to the raw colony of Australia, drawn there by the lure of adventure and of gold. After his marriage to Mary, he ceases to be a tradesman, and returns to his profession of medicine. It is a precarious thing to do, but with his energy and Mary's sense, they win an established place in the growing town of Ballarat. Yet Richard's temperament, never a tractable one, has become more restless: he is irked by the rough colonial life and its lack of advantages; and at the end he tears up his roots and sails back to England. Miss Richardson brings to this novel a profound understanding of her characters, and the ability to make every detail of their lives take on a heightened significance after she has presented it in her careful, strong-ribbed prose. Richard and Mary live in a spacious world that exists with convincing completeness, for around those

two main figures there is a host of minor characters, the whole scope of Australian society, from those whom a lucky chance has made people of leisure to the riffraff of the mining camps. These are all individualized by subtly effective means; and yet at the same time, a sense of the whole panorama of the colony is given as well. In the changing fortunes of the Mahonys, and even more sharply in those of minor characters, the fluidity of social and economic conditions in a young and booming land is impressively revealed. In this land where opportunists flourish, Richard's high instincts and truculent idealism make him suffer; and the beginning of his tragedy, which comes to a climax in "Ultima Thule," may be clearly seen. Miss Richardson's previous readers will eagerly take up this book, to read further into the lives of characters that already have become intimately known to them. New readers have the privilege of beginning, with this volume, a trilogy of novels that is certain to be acknowledged of large importance in the prose literature of this time. W. B.

Joy Is My Name, by Sarah Salt. New York: Payson and Clarke. $2.50.

NOT until she reaches Part III of this, her second novel, does Miss Salt reveal the author of "Sense and Sensuality," and of those glittering stories in "A Tiny Seed of Love." The first two parts of "Joy Is My Name" are so thin in content, so heavy in phrasing, that they seem amateurish in comparison to the maturity of the madhouse episode, which, in itself, makes the book worth while. Perhaps, in the beginning, Joyce's fragile prettiness should be weighted artificially, enough to hold the reader's interest, until the list of adolescent experiences through which she runs—loss of illusion in the facility with which one becomes a great actress, the perfection of mother-love, and the unselfishness of a lover's love—has made her seem more important. The close-cropped dialogue of the final chapters is somewhat reminiscent of Hemingway—to add one more star to the literary lights to whom Miss Salt has been compared. W. T.

A Correction

In Edmund Wilson's article, "Axël and Rimbaud," in the issue of February 26, the sentence in the tenth line from the bottom in the first column on page 36 should read: "The Symbolists, though they also hate formulas," instead of "though they also have formulas."

Contributors

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